

Alberto Canen

The observer

Genesis

From the poetic narrative
to a scientific explanation.



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Alberto Canen

The observer

Cover and interior illustrations done by the author.

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Canen, Alberto

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The account of creation in Genesis, is it just an introduction to biblical scripture? What are its verses hiding? Myth, invention or scientific truth? This book attempts to address an issue about which both scientists and religious people feel uncomfortable. Science flatly dismisses the story, first with a smirk and then with anger, and the Catholic Church has relegated it to a mere introduction to the Scriptures. "The tale of Creation is a religious text with religious teachings," they say. "There is no science in it", "we should not seek scientific explanations", of course.

But...

I must admit that I have always been a harsh critic of the Genesis. I was always among those we tried to conceal a smile and changed the subject in order to avoid discussing it. Talking about Genesis and Creation in particular seemed unthinkable to me..., until a few months ago.

It is about a year since my youngest son asked me about God with great interest, more than he used to have.

At the time we chatted, I explained everything I could within my knowledge and we agreed to read the holy books of the major religions to expand concepts. So we

began to read, first the Bible [\[1\]](#), as the main book of Catholicism-Judaism-Islam, to then continue with the Bhagavad Gita [\[2\]](#) of Hinduism-Buddhism [\[3\]](#).

1 - See appendix I

2 - Bhagavad-Gita, the most important Hindu scripture. It is considered one of the most important religious texts in the world. The term Bhagavad-Gita means Bhagawan 's song (Bhagawan, God, who has [all]opulence). Often the Bhagavad-Gita is simply called Gita (Gi-tá-). Although the Sanskrit noun is feminine Gita ("Song"), in Spanish it is often translated as masculine can be viewed many times as male ("el canto" instead of "la canción"), and the stress can also change (from gi: 't?a to 'gi:t?a:). It is part of the epic text Mahabharata (possibly from the third century BC.) and consists of 700 verses. It contains a conversation between Krishna -whom the Hindus consider an incarnation of Vishnu (while krisnaístas consider it the origin of Vishnu), or as the main personality of God- and his cousin and friend Arjuna on the battlefield in the moments before the start of the Kurukshetra war. In response to the confusion and moral dilemma of Arjuna, Krishna explains to him all the mysteries of spirituality. During his speech, Krishna reveals his identity as the "God himself" (suaíam Bhagawan), blessing Arjuna with an impressive view of his divine universal form among other teachings.

3 - Although much of Buddhism denies that their doctrine has its essence in the Bhagavad Gita, and therefore in Hinduism, it is undeniable that Buddha's teachings are based on or are the same as those of Hinduism: dharma (right action) and the end of samsara (cycle of birth) to attain nirvana (enlightenment).

When I read him the Bible, when we were moving forward with the book of Joseph, I had what we might call a revelation. I understood then the reason for the Bible, the reason for the creation of the Chosen People, the reason for the coming of the Messiah, The Creation, Eden, the policies of the Catholic Church, the momentous task of the Jewish people, polytheism, monotheism, and much more. This revelation caused me such a shock that I decided to write it down and I poured it in my book *One God (Un Único Dios)*.

The explanation of the Creation story of Genesis was to be part of that book, but after analyzing it with my editor and literary adviser we decided it was better to leave it for a separate book as it warranted special treatment.

When I finished the book *One God*, in August 2011 I returned to the account of creation in Genesis and devoted myself to solve it.

It was clear to me that the Genesis story was real; they were facts that could have happened but were somehow masked.

What was the key? What was the Rosetta stone that would allow me to interpret the narrative?

The key, I discovered, was that the story -the text- was a narrative of someone who was telling what he was seeing. That was the key -the board, so to speak- on which I had to assemble the pieces of this puzzle.

In the text of Creation there was an observer, a narrator. They were not just verses, no, it was clear that it was a narration: the narration of an observer.

By introducing this variable, the narrator-observer, all made sense. From then on the rest was just a case of looking for the right questions: Was it a vision or a revelation? Or both? How long did the vision take? Who was he? Where did he live? What was his location?

The location, the location was crucial.

The observer and its location were the cornerstones for understanding the story of Creation.

This book describes the journey I had to make from the Bible to science in a permanent back and forth until I managed to unravel the mystery.

I encourage you to join me in my discovery.

Let's have a cup of coffee, find a comfortable chair, and leave the preconceptions aside for a moment.

Let us open our minds and look at what mysteries have been hidden in the verses of Genesis for over three thousand years.

The version I have used for this comparison is The Jerusalem Bible.

The Jerusalem Bible (Bible de Jerusalem) is a version of the Bible published in installments between 1948 and 1953 that the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem published later as the result of the translation to French of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. It was later translated into other local languages, and to the Spanish language. The approach they took was to compare the translation with the original texts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Chapter 2

1

THE BIBLE, THE GENESIS, CREATION

Seven days?

Who has not wondered: seven days? Yes, who would not? –as we look at each other askance, with a mean grin.

It is a fact that fewer and fewer people believe that God created the heavens and the earth in seven days.

What about the dinosaurs? Well, by the time this question arises (a purely rhetorical one, of course) we are already engaged in a discussion that might embarrass even the toughest hooligans.

Usually, speaking of Genesis leads us, inevitably, to an irreconcilable division between science and religion. Apparently, one overrides the other. If Genesis says seven days, and science has proved there were six billion years, it all indicates that something is wrong, obviously... in The Bible.

It is difficult for us to say that the analysis of science is wrong, apart maybe from a hundred million years up or down. So, following this logic, we will base this analysis on what science claims that were the early days of the solar system and of our planet, the Earth, based on the current findings.

Well, if the solar system and the Earth have been in existence for more than six thousand million years since they were just a cloud of dust and gas floating adrift in our beautiful galaxy... how did we get to those seven days? Sure, I know, don't tell me: pure superstition, myths, and ancient tales of various mythologies. Well, I don't blame you, I was of the same opinion until, reading the Bible to my youngest son, I discovered that something was wrong with the texts of Genesis, or wasn't?

Something in the sacred texts caught my attention and I stopped for a moment to look at them and I thought: what if the Genesis made sense? What if the narrative were consistent with the scientific explanation? What if the text of Genesis was the vision of someone who has seen the creation of the solar system like in a movie? And I remembered how many discoveries have started with this simple phrase: What if...?

And yes, let's try to approach the issue from that perspective, after all... what could we lose?

Of course, I should clarify at this point that I believe in God. I believe that God created everything. I am, as they say, a believer.

Philosophically I lean more towards the Hindu-Buddhist side, than towards the Jewish-Catholic-Muslim, but as God is the same in both cases, I see no conflict in reading the holy books of both religions, and analyze what God has told men, in Mesopotamia as well as in the Indus Valley.

Well, let's see then what God has told us.

Chapter 3

2

BILLIONS

First, let's reflect on the "never well weighted" seven days.

Of course, the seven biblical days should have some sort of explanation, I thought, and I devoted myself to find it.

The first thing that occurred to me was that if God was infinite, a God's day might last a billion years, so seven days of God may well be six billion years. You may say, why six billion years? Well, because it is currently estimated that from the original nebula to the present six billion years have passed, and four billion six hundred

million years since the consolidation of the Earth.

Although Occident has not handled major figures -and when I say major figures I mean figures as large as billions of years- in their mythologies, it may be interesting to note that in India, at the time of writing the Genesis they were already used to thinking of numbers of that magnitude.

For example: according to the Vedic scriptures [\[4\]](#), the four yugas (ages) form a cycle of 4,320,000 years (Majá-yuga, or 'great age'), which is repeated again and again. The first is the Satya-yuga or 'age of truth' of 1,728,000 years in which the average life span of a person was 100,000 years. It is the Golden Age, according to another classification.

Then comes the Duapara-yuga or 'second age' which covers 1,296,000 years with an average life span of 10,000 years; it is also called the Silver Age.

The 'third age', Treta-yuga, lasted about 864,000 years, with an average life span of 1,000 years; it is also known as the Bronze Age (although it is not meant to match the Bronze Age in India).

Finally, Kali Yuga or "age of quarrel" lasted 432,000 years where the average life span of a human being was 100 years (at the beginning of it, 5100 years ago). It was called Iron Age (it is not meant to match the Iron Age in India either).

Interesting, very interesting.

4 - Vedas (literally "knowledge" in Sanskrit) are four ancient texts, the basis of Vedic religion, which was prior to the Hindu religion. The Sanskrit word Veda comes from an Indo-European term (Weid), related to the vision, is the root of the Latin words vedere (see) and Veritas (truth) and the Spanish words "ver" (see) and "verdad" (truth). The Vedic texts were developed into what is called the Vedic culture, based on castes (varna or 'color') and ashrams (religious life stages).

So far I didn't find any drawbacks to consider the "seven days".

If one believes in God, it would be normal, I think, to believe that He is infinite, thus it has not bothered me at all changing days for millions or billions of years

Let's continue.

Let's consider now the explanation that science gives us about the birth of the solar system and our planet Earth, in order to then be able to compare it with the text of Genesis.

I invite you to place ourselves in place and time.

Let's go to that moment when it all started in our little corner of the universe.

Six billion years ago, a cloud of gas and stardust -what is called a planetary nebula-, floats adrift in space.

This nebula, the cloud of stellar gas and dust is the waste product of a star that after its death as a supernova [\[5\]](#) (star that explodes in its death, its final stage) scatters into space the materials that have been formed inside it from simpler elements.

The objects created in this stellar oven -now more complex- make up this huge cloud of dust, gas and ice that floats peacefully adrift. Our local nebula.

5 - Supernova: Star that explodes and throws around most of its mass to high speeds. After this explosive phenomenon there may be two outcomes: either the star is completely destroyed, or its central core remains, which in turn collapses by itself giving life to a very massive object such as a neutron star or a Black Hole.

The phenomenon of the explosion of a supernova is similar to the explosion of a Nova, but with the essential difference that in the first case the energies involved are a million times stronger. When a catastrophic event like this happens, astronomers observe a star igniting in the sky that can reach apparent magnitudes of -6m or more.

The explosion of a supernova is a relatively rare phenomenon. We have testimonies of such events: in 1054, a star in the constellation Taurus ignited, the remains of which can still be seen in the form of the beautiful Crab Nebula; in 1572, the great astronomer Tycho Brahe observed a supernova shining in the constellation Cassiopeia, in 1640, a similar phenomenon was observed by Kepler. These are all appearances of supernovae that exploded in our Galaxy.

Today it is estimated that each galaxy produces, on average, a supernova every six centuries. A famous supernova of an external galaxy is Andromeda, appeared in 1885.

At one point, this calm, this placid floating, is altered by the arrival of waves, wave-shock waves produced possibly by the explosion of another supernova, another star which ends its days in the vicinity.

These shock waves, these waves that impact and shake our peaceful nebula trigger a contraction on it, and when it contracts it starts spinning and flattening.

This flattened disk that is now our planetary nebula leads most of the material toward the center, where it accumulates.

This huge mass of matter (mostly gas) makes it collapse under its own weight and due to gravity, initiating the combustion of a fledgling central star, the Sun.

The same force of gravity -the same gravitational force- that generates matter accumulation in the heart and leads to the creation of a star, in our case the Sun, also produces swirls and clumps in the dust disk.

These lumps that turn like swirls about themselves and continue their journey around the center are the nodes that will give rise to planets.

These primordial planets, these nodes or swirls of stellar matter, continue their path around the sun, but not in a circular motion, but in a spiral, falling toward it, moving closer with every lap, every orbit. It follows that when their spins started, the original swirls, they were farther away than the "finished" planets are now.

And what was the consequence of that approach to the Sun down that spiral road? Well, what happened was that those baby planets we might say were "cleaning" of debris, dust, and gas the space through which they passed and, thus, they increased their mass with the captured matter.

So, let's recap and look at the big picture.

First comes a chaotic cloud of dust and gas, the result of a prior supernova explosion that scatters its matter into space.

Then, an accretion disk is generated from that matter which will give rise, first to the Sun and then to the planets.

Finally, that disk is itself a cloud of dust and gas, which the orbiting planets will be cleaning from the surrounding space.

When they "sweep" that material by drawing it to themselves, the planets will increase their size with the captured dust and gas.

Many of these rocks, dust and ice, remnants from that cloud, are the meteorites that still today keep hurtling to earth, and that have scarred the surface of the moon and our own planet.

Also the solar wind, product of the nuclear combustion of the Sun, cleans the surrounding space from the light material and dislodges it into the confines of the system.

While this wave of gas and light dust is ejected by the solar wind, it is again caught in its path by the gravitational pull of planets in its wake, thus increasing a little more the mass of each one of them.

Well, we already have got primitive planets revolving in nearly circular orbits around the sun, because when the overall movement of the system was stabilized, these orbits are no longer spiral.

These planets, which were receiving material from the space gas and powder -possibly often in the form of violent collisions- must have existed at the time in molten lava state (in the case of non-gaseous planets), because the friction generates heat, and those collisions produced a lot of friction which resulted in a large increase in temperature that melted rocks and dust uniting all in single, and often almost spherical masses.

Since the planets were receiving less and less impacts, they began to cool, and as they cooled down, they generated a shell, a scab, a solid surface on the earth's crust on which we currently walk. Not only the surface was formed, but also the gases that were released and trapped by the force of gravity formed an atmosphere; this was the case in our planet Earth and how the atmosphere which we breathe today was created.

Meanwhile, the ice of the original cloud, also trapped, originated water and therefore its accumulation would generate the seas, rivers and rain.

Well, okay, let's now think about how it was like when the planet, even though it had cooled enough to form the earth's crust, was still too hot for water to accumulate in liquid form on the surface. At that time, the cycle: evaporation-condensation-rain was much faster due to high surface temperatures. In those days, the humidity was truly unbearable. Showers and thunderstorms occurred without continuity. The rain evaporated as soon as it touched the earth.

An impenetrable sky, heavy fog and sunlight that could barely filtered.

Surely it would have been impossible for one person to have been on the surface, to have seen the stars or the sun itself due, first, to the thickness of the clouds and fog, and secondly, because of the remnant dust which would still be floating in space among emerging planets.

Sounds too complicated or difficult to imagine? Yes, it does.

I think that it would be a good exercise to put ourselves in that situation to imagine ourselves in the midst of a severe sandstorm and once there try to see the Sun.

We would probably see the light, the glow that surrounded us, but it would be difficult to accurately identify the source, the origin of that light. Dust, "sand" that flies in the storm, that airborne dust would prevent us from seeing the Sun.

Moreover, while this "sandstorm" goes on "outside", here, in the planet's atmosphere, we would be in the middle of a torrential boiling rain with clouds, thunder and lightning, as well as volcanic eruptions, ash rains and poisonous fumes.

Certainly all a stage, a huge stage, a scenario very different from today.

This scenario, in which we probably would not last a minute nowadays, would create the ideal conditions to start the journey of life (humidity, temperature, solar radiation and cosmic rays, which impacted with hardly any impediments). Ideal conditions that would create the first amino acids, the first molecular chains. Chains that later would give rise to more complex organisms.

Now, that the conditions are ripe, let's examine the next step. The evolution of life.

Chapter 4

3

AND IN THIS CORNER... LIVE!

We saw earlier that life as we know it on our planet, began with and in the water. Water has a key role in our kind of existence. Consider that we humans are composed of seventy percent of that element; we could almost say that we are sea animals adapted to the surface.

Well, we must place ourselves there and think that, the planet is cooling, the water remains liquid longer, and it is accumulating in the lowest places by simple gravity simultaneously.

This initial ocean, it seems, was just one and so were the lands -as continents.

Science calls today that super-continent *Vaalbara-Pangaea* [\[6\]](#).

6 - Pangaea (Vaalbara-Pangaea): from the Greek prefix "pan" meaning "all" and the Greek word "gea", "soil" or "earth". Thus, it would be a word that means "the whole earth."

Pangaea is the result of the evolution of the first continent Vaalbara, which was probably formed about 4 billion years ago. Pangaea splits some 208 million years ago into Laurasia and Gondwana. At present fragments of this ancient continent are part of Africa, Australia, India and Madagascar.

Chronology

Minor or partial supercontinents:

- Nena (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years).
- Atlantica (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years).
- Gondwana (it emerges about 200 million years ago).
- Laurasia (Along with Gondwana, Laurasia emerged about 200 million years ago).
- Eurasia (the supercontinent Eurasia is now made up of Europe and Asia).

Major supercontinents:

- Vaalbara (it emerges about 4 billion years ago).
- Ur (supercontinent, it emerges about 3 billion years ago).
- Kenorland (it emerges about 2,5 billion years ago).
- Columbia (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years ago).
- Rodinia (it emerges about 1,1 billion years ago).
- Pannotia (it emerges about 600 million years ago).
- Pangaea (it emerges about 300 million years ago).

Pangaea does not remain as the only continent but gets fractured and its segments drift, sail so to speak on the molten lava beneath the crust and lead to the continents we know today.

Let's tell now tell a *racconto* and put all these facts in perspective.

Note that life, to evolve, develops first in the sea and then migrates to the land, while the supercontinent Pangaea-Vaalbara breaks and moves across the globe to fill the places we find familiar today.

At sea, where life generated animals, plants were also created, which moved inland and became land-dwelling vegetation, trees, grass, etc. ..

Some of the marine animals that had "come out" to land, while evolving, returned to the sea where they continued their evolution -e.g. cetaceans (whales, dolphins, etc.).

Other primeval animals became used to living on the surface and resulted in the famous dinosaurs, who reigned on the planet for about one hundred and sixty million years.

I do not want to overwhelm or drown you with the history of our world -many of you are certainly aware of it- but it is important we refresh what we know and try to notice certain "details" that are essential clues for understanding the topic at hand.

Let continue, (with a small remark).

Dinosaurs emerge about two hundred and thirty million years ago and disappear -go extinct- about sixty five million years approximately.

Considering that the human species, the first *Homo*, appears only in the last two million years, we understand that dinosaurs and humans never coexisted.

From the last dinosaur to the first *Homo* there was a sixty million years lapse, enough to not have ever encountered one another.

At this point I would like to focus your attention on some details of the evolution of life that will be important when we discuss the Genesis.

Interestingly, some dinosaurs could fly -like the Pterosaur-, and may have had their habitats on the beach. Consider that these animals had wings like bats and they were unfit to taxi like a plane or a duck, but they needed to jump from a high area, a high ridge to start the flight; and for that, what better than a cliff above the sea? Some of them were very large animals with a 12 meters wingspan, almost like a small plane.

It is also very important to emphasize that humans have been the last to appear in this story, the story of evolution.

Right. As you may have noticed it took about six billion years for the Solar System to form and man appeared in the last two million years.

It is common practice to compare these six billion years with one year of three hundred sixty five days, in which the nebula begins to collapse the first of January and the human species makes its appearance at 23:00, December 31.

Mankind has his *moment* at the end, at the very end of the whole process.

I think this brief *racconto* of the history of the Earth gives us a sufficient and necessary basis of information to perform our comparison, so let's try!

Chapter 5

4

Behold...

GENESIS [\[7\]](#)

7 - Genesis. The Greek name comes from the contents of the book: the origin of the world, mankind and the Jewish people, the genealogy of all mankind from the beginning of time. Also "Genesis" has the sense of "prologue" as Jewish history properly begins with the Exodus, which Genesis is merely a prelude. This title appears in the Septuagint or Greek Septuagint (LXX). In Hebrew, the book is called "Berešyt": "In the Beginning, from the first word in the opening sentence. The text used for analysis belongs to The Jerusalem Bible, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1973.

«In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, with a divine wind sweeping over the waters. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called light "day", and darkness he called "night". Evening came and morning came: the first day. »(Genesis 1:1-5).

Let's observe carefully what this first paragraph tells us.

In this description, I clearly distinguish the original chaos nebula of cosmic dust that science mentions. A "sea" of dust, for someone who may be watching in the darkness, and who does not have the slightest idea that what he is witnessing is not water but a nebula in which he (our possible observer) is "floating". This individual is in the place, in the exact place, in which hundreds of millions of years later the Earth in formation will be located. Moreover, as he is not yet on solid ground all he can discern or understand, according to its parameters, is the abyss, the abyss of space.

Then, this same individual (who continues his observation and narrates what he sees) perceives that the light shines for the first time and believes that God at that precise moment has created it -the light- as he still cannot see that it is the sun that

originates the light. He sees the light, but not where it comes from. For him it is as if God had "switched on" the light.

Then we face the first major dilemma typical of Genesis: how light can be created before the stars? (This obviously rhetorical question is usually accompanied by some skeptical gesture, knowing boastful look and intent to end the conversation). Yes, it is true, it cannot be, but -there is always a but- what if we placed the viewer in the exact location where the primordial swirl was, the one which will lead to our planet? It is obvious that our observer could have seen the light, but would have been unable to know where that light had come from, because -as noted earlier- the "dust storm" would have prevented it. Also, as he would be "standing" on the swirling, he would perceive the passage of day-night, light-darkness, due to its rotation. This person -because he'd be standing, situated, on the swirling- would turn with him, and therefore, a moment he would be facing the light, and the next, he would have his back to it.

Here, we can already realize that it is essential, fundamental, the existence of an observer and -even more-its location, in order to understand the Genesis.

This individual who notes, and then tells what he has seen, is watching it from a particular site, from a specific location. He is somewhere stationed at the time when he "watches", at the time of receiving the vision, the revelation. And that place, that location where he is, is what makes the difference; that's what makes us believe that the description of Genesis may make sense; it is the key to the riddle. The key that opens a world of possibilities

(What now? Where is the boastful grin? ...).

It is necessary to clarify that when I talk about an observer I mean someone who in recent times, say about three thousand years ago, receives a vision or a revelation of God and through it he watches the creation of the solar system.

It doesn't mean that the observer has witnessed the creation at the time God was doing it, but that he saw or grasped it later through some kind of extremely concise vision.

I believe that to many people Genesis never made sense. Or at least I think it did not make sense because most of those who analyze it consider that the information about Creation (Genesis) should have been given to the person who wrote the Bible in the format of a book of science, with scientific data, charts and graphs; or in the format of a detailed revelation, that would allow us to understand what happened from all angles. Specifically with this possibility: to see events from all angles.

It is possible that the reason for this prejudice is that our scientific mind expects scientific data to be accompanied by graphs, charts, statistics, and -of course- the correct format. However, if we look at how people who get visions or revelations of God "see" what He reveals, we'll understand that these divine events never occur according to human parameters. Usually, these visions or revelations are just that, visions. Visions like very short films about which the viewer has no control. The visions are usually similar to a dream.

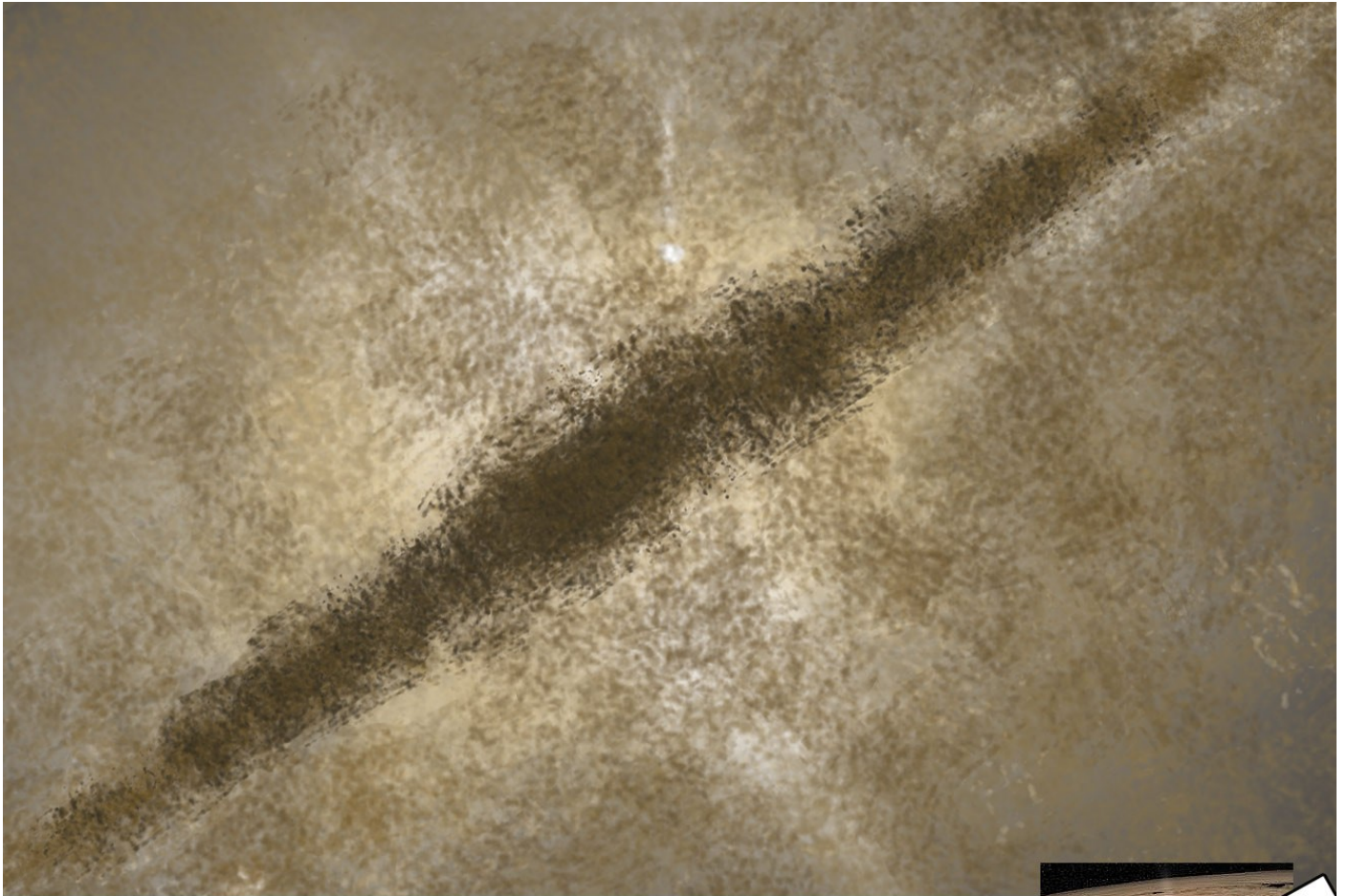
Sometimes these visions are accompanied by an idea that becomes clear after ecstatic contemplation or, in some cases, there is someone who talks to the person who has the experience and explains something in particular that may -or may not- be related to what he has seen.

Right.

Let's advance a little further with our approach and try to unravel this mystery.

If this guy (our observer) had found himself floating in space above the solar system during its formation he would have "seen" that the star is born along with the light, but clearly that was not the case as he first sees light and much after the existence of the stars. So at this point I asked myself why? Why doesn't he see? Why doesn't he see something so obvious?

Just because he can't.



- View from the observer's location

The arrow indicates the location of the observer

View from space ●



It is certain, to me that its location -the site from where he observes- is not in space but in the accretion disk, at the level where the planets are created, and it is precisely for this reason that the stars are hidden behind the remaining dust. The key, the key to this mystery is the observer's location, and that location has to be, without question, a point on the surface of the planet. Therefore, we will continue our comparison under the assumption that the observer is standing on what will eventually be the surface of our planet, Earth.

Notice what happens on the second day:

«God said,

«"Let there be a vault through the middle of the waters to divide the waters in two". And so it was: God made the vault, and it divided the waters under the vault from the waters above the vault. God called the

vault "heaven". Evening came and morning came: the second day.»
(Genesis 1:6-8).

In this passage, our observer remains in the same place, the surface of the Earth (now already formed), and from there he tells what he "sees", the vision that God has sent to him.

To me it is obvious he is observing the cooling of the planet and, as a result, water condensation, the water that it is beginning to accumulate on the surface and the clear separation of the gases in the atmosphere that will form the sky, heaven.

For him, before the separation of the waters, everything was mixed, hence the "separation". But what is it that is mixed? Water and air (sky).

Such is the existing steam and moisture, to which clouds are added -possibly volcanic clouds- that his feeling is that the sky is mixed with rain and seawater.

For him this is very confusing. But as the Earth (the planet) gradually cools, the separation of the waters -we could say- is evident. Rain is rain, the land is land and the sea is the sea.

Have I caught your attention yet? Have I? Not yet?
Right.

Third day:

«God said,

«"Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear". And so it was. God called the dry land "earth" and the mass of waters "seas", and God saw that it was good.

«God said,

«"Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees on earth, bearing fruit with their seed inside, each corresponding to its own species". And so it was. The earth produced vegetation: the various kinds of seed-bearing plants and the fruit trees with seed inside, each corresponding to its own species. God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came: the third day.» (Genesis 1:9-13).

Here comes, again, very briefly, what we had observed in our *racconto* about what science deduced on the evolution of the planet.

We must not forget that our observer sees these events at a truly dizzying pace; that's how it must have happened, since the planet's six billion years -or at least four billion six hundred years- were summarized to him in seven days.

Let's analyze this third day.

The water collects in a single ocean-sea and the land in a single mass.

I am convinced that our observer is referring here to the supercontinent Pangaea Vaalbara.

It's too coincidental the observation the narrator makes on one land and one sea, almost too coincidental and unnecessary if it weren't because that's the way it really happened.

But he could not see it (we're talking about a super continent) therefore it must have been an idea that he saw in the vision. This makes its mention more interesting, almost remarkable.

Then this guy (the observer) sees growing plants around him which he identifies with life forms known to him: trees, seeds, fruits, perhaps algae.

Fourth day:

«God said,

«"Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years. Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth". And so it was. God made the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars. God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came: the fourth day.» (Genesis 1:14-19).

And now our observer -at last- can see a clear sky, free of clouds, moisture and gases, as well as of stardust -the remaining stardust that had disappeared from the

surrounding space because it had been captured by the planets and swept by the solar wind.

Finally, he sees the sun, the moon and the stars and, of course, he believes that God has created them right then.

Obviously he is not aware that the stars already existed before but he had not spotted them yet. And why not? Why hadn't he seen them? He had not noticed them because -as we had noted- the conditions of the atmosphere and outer space had not allowed him to. Remember the dust storm in space, and the torrential rains, the water steam and the volcanic gases in the planet's atmosphere. But now, with a colder earth and growing vegetation, the air would be clean enough for the general appearance of the sky to be quite similar to the present, much like the sky we're used to seeing. A clean sky, blue and clear. Enough to observe the sun, the moon and the stars.

Now with a more "normal" environment, we might say, our observer continues, standing in the same place, watching time pass before his eyes at a frightening pace. At the same time he tries to interpret, through self-referrals and the knowledge of the time in which he lives, events that he doesn't understand. Facts that human kind would need -at least- two thousand, or three thousand years and hundreds of scientific discoveries to interpret.

Fifth day:

«God said,

«"Let the waters be alive with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds wing their way above the earth across the vault of heaven". And so it was. God created great sea-monsters and all the creatures that glide and teem in the waters in their own species, and winged birds in their own species. God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply on land". Evening came and morning came: the fifth day.» (Genesis 1:20-23).

At this point, I must admit that the fact that in the story plants emerged first and marine animals later, generated some concern in me... it just did not make sense.

The idea bothered me for days without being able to find an explanation that appealed me.

In the end, as I could not realize the reason for this sequence, I went back to the central hypothesis -the location of the observer- and then I realized that maybe our observer was on a beach. It occurred to me that the same spot that concerned us so much, the exact location of the observer, must have been on a beach.

This little detail made the difference, as a piece that falls into its proper place. If the observer was in a beach -then- it makes sense that he had been able to see first the plants-algae and then the sea life, the birds (perhaps flying dinosaurs), the great sea monsters (marine dinosaurs) and the other sea animals.

With this new location of the observer -indeed by identifying its location- we could find this sequence more logical: plants-birds-sea animals (sea monsters).

It is also possible that, between glaciations, the beach is completely flooded and that, perhaps, some of our observer's vision were submerged, and hence the "bubbling waters for their species."

We should note that the continents drifted over the plates to their current locations, and that while they did it there were several glaciations. These glaciations retained liquid water on the ground as snow, ice, and the water flooded the coast at every opportunity. This to-and-fro of water occurred many times.

The sea monsters



And what about the land animals?

We are getting there, let's not rush.

Sixth day:

«God said,

«"Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds". And so it was. God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.

«God said,

«"Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground". God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them,

«"Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth".

«God also said,

«"Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food. And to all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage of the plants as their food". And so it was. God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day.» (Genesis 1:24-31).

In this paragraph of the sixth day we find the emergence of land animals and then human beings. It's very important, very important, that man is the last to appear, we already discussed why. The fact that it is the last is not a minor detail. Man could have appeared at the beginning of the story and it would have been more reasonable

or consistent if we were to believe that the whole story was invented. It seems to me that someone who invents a story of creation normally begins with the most important character: the human being. However, in Genesis man, the center of creation, is the last to make his arrival.

Perfect, so far just perfect.

But ... again a but, why in the description land animals are mentioned after the plants, birds and the sea animals? Yes, why?

This did not fit, there was something missing. I had overlooked some piece of this puzzle.

I was again at a dead end. Some piece was missing again. I mulled it over for days, with no solution.

(Some of you are probably now saying: "Did you see?", but don't go so fast, because this isn't over yet).

Finally I returned to the basis of my theory that focuses on the location of the observer. I thought: let's find the exact location.

The key can be given to us by the individual who sees, by the observer.

Who was this observer? Where did he live? What was he doing? What did he do for a living?

As we have no reference about this individual, because the only thing we have is his story, we must deduce it.

The Genesis is a narrative that is part of the texts, stories and traditions compiled by Moses, or at least that's what the Bible scholars suppose. Following this logic we can deduce that if the text is part of the cultural heritage of the Hebrews, it is so because whoever wrote it or narrated it was a member of its people or at least someone very close to them. With this information we would be able to define a much more precise geographic location; the area would be confined to the region of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris. Our observer would very possibly be a shepherd.

Well, well, well ... very well.

At that moment something fell into the tangle of clues and pieces. I had the feeling, the certainty of having found something important. I thought: I must investigate that place, investigate Mesopotamia in the early days of Pangaea. I searched and searched

in books and ... Bingo! Guess. Mesopotamia, or at least the territories that would one day become Mesopotamia, were a beach, a beach of Arabia. He was at the land mass that would drift with the other blocks and then end up "almost crashing" with Asia. The beach was there, the beach was the place from which our observer saw the sea monsters.

While our block of Arabia drifts on the ocean, that small sector -that millions of years later would be Mesopotamia- is a beach, a long beach that stretches in front of the ocean. But beware, because it is not just any beach. Before starting the drift -or we could say at the time it was still part of that one continent- that region is a small coastal edge of Pangaea. Then, after moving, it continues being a beach until it collides with Asia and it's no longer a beach -at least in part- to become an inland region. But, and here's another very interesting "but", the field left inland is just the land which becomes Mesopotamia while the rest of the coast remains a beach, the Gulf Beach.

Thus, we could explain why our observer saw first algae-plants, then sea animals -sea monsters and birds while Pangaea drifts- and finally land animals -without monsters (because there weren't any dinosaurs any more)- and at the very end, men.

I should make a small remark: in the narrative, referring to marine animals he speaks of "monsters", but when he mentions land animals, he doesn't. Why? Yeah, I wonder why some sea animals seemed monstrous but the land animals didn't?

Behold the key.

Behold THE key.

Let's recall the timeline.

If we consider that when this guy is watching the sea (while drifting on the block of Arabia) it is just the time of the dinosaurs, during which the beach may have also been submerged at some point; and that he then sees the mainland in the period when dinosaurs were extinct, the time sequence acquires a unique logic [\[8\]](#).

What the viewer sees, facing the sea, at the time of the dinosaurs are sea dinosaurs, thus the "sea monsters" that he had never seen and would never see again. However, at the sight of land animals none of them catches his attention, despite the elephants, and giraffes, simply because for him they weren't monsters. Animals were known to him.

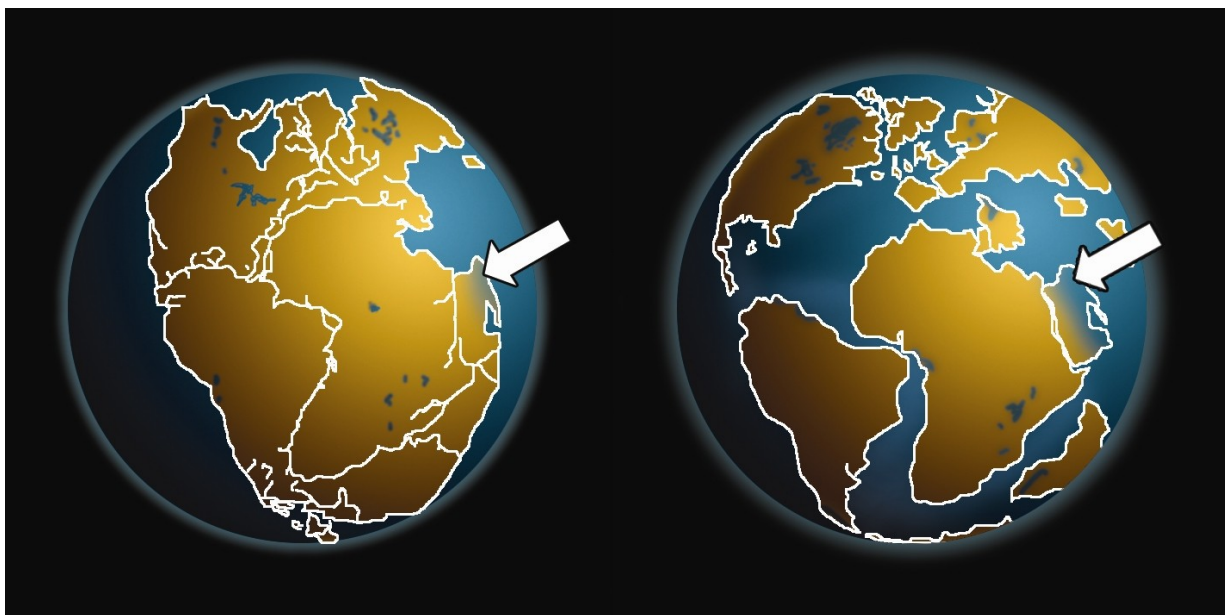
It is very interesting the fact that when Saudi "collides" with Asia dinosaurs were extinct. There were no monsters inland. Gone were "land monsters" that our observer could ever see.

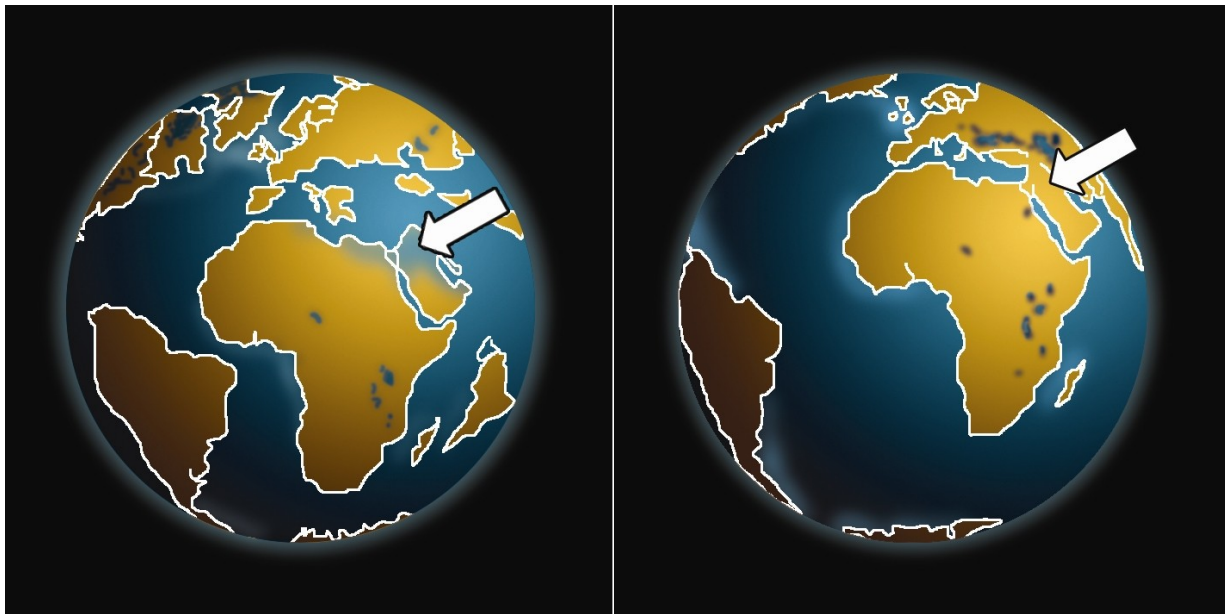
Think this guy was always "stuck" to the floor; he never turned, he never changed the direction of his gaze.

While his vision lasted, at all times, he came across a display of events that happened before his eyes, as if he had been in front of a movie screen on which Creation was being projected. Or, as a cameraman filming with a fixed camera.

He turned with the planet, moved with the ground and, of course, he was not able to fly. Which, though it might seem like a disadvantage, actually gives us the certainty that what he saw was absolutely real; a gift of God to a particular person, possibly for him to tell it what and thus reveal the mechanisms of God to create solar systems and planets like Earth.

Pangaea and the continental drift





The arrow indicates the location of the observer

8 - The mass extinction of the Cretaceous-Tertiary was a period of mass extinction of species about 65 million years ago. It corresponds to the end of the Cretaceous period and the beginning of the Tertiary period. It is also known as mass extinction of K/T (German Kreide / Tertiär Grenze), to mark the boundary between the Cretaceous-Tertiary.

No one knows the exact duration of this event. About 50% of biological species disappeared, including most of the dinosaurs. Many explanations have been proposed for this phenomenon; the most widely accepted is that it was the result of an asteroid impact on Earth from space.

At this point I will tell you something very interesting.

When this book was almost finished and we were doing the final corrections, in those days, I was watching television and going over some programs that I'd recorded.

As I didn't find any comedy -which is what I like to see after a day's work- I checked the documentary programs recorded and randomly selected one on the Sahara Desert.

Watching the documentary, to my surprise, I hear scientists talking about the enormous amount of sea fossils that formed the sands of the Sahara desert. They said that the Sahara had been a shallow sea beach, so much so that mangrove grew (mangrove trees are very salt tolerant and their roots are immersed in sea water).

The documentary referred to a particular area in Egypt called Wadi Al-Hitan, or Whale Valley due to the large number of fossils of whales and ancestors of these. They also commented that the stones used in the construction of the pyramids were

crammed full with coastal marine fossils, i.e., shells, seashells, fossils and other more ancient like nummulites ("small coin"), extinct foraminifera that lived from between 55 and 39 million years to the present.

At the end of the film -this documentary program- geologists concluded that all the top range of Africa had been partly submerged while continental drift occurred, and some sea-shore land had risen in times Africa is approaching Asia and block Arabia "collides" with Asia -(now Iran, Iraq, Turkey).

Huge surprise.

Huge and pleasant surprise.

If we consider how close is the beach, or the key location where we assume that our observer was, from the area of this "valley of the whales" -less than 1,000 kilometers-, and we also consider the manifest existence of fossils that concludes that the area was submerged enough so that at certain times our individual could see the "famous" sea monsters, the theory at hand, our observer's theory and its location make perfect sense.

(I guess, at this point, I have got your attention and there are no sneers ...).

And finally...

At the end of the sixth day, man makes his appearance.

«"Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground". God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.» (Genesis 1:26-27).

Not in the first, nor the second, not even in the sixth. How can that be? How is it that man was created by God at the end and not the beginning? Come on; are we not the most important thing? We are the center of creation! Should He not have created us in the beginning? But he didn't. He created us at the end. Completely the opposite of what would be expected of a creationist account.

A perfect finale.

In six billion years that the whole process of creation of the Solar System lasted, Homo sapiens appears at the end, in the last two million years.

Precisely.

At the end of the sixth day.

And now... the seventh day.

«Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested after all his work of creating.

«Such was the story of heaven and earth as they were created.

«At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven» (Genesis 2:1-4).

This last day has something extra in addition to the day of rest, in which God sees his work; He decides it is already finished and there is a truce, and we read again that God made the earth and the heavens, neither more nor less.

This repetition of the phrase -earth and heaven, already mentioned in the first day- is the key to unlocking the mystery.

What about ...?

We return to the LOCATION -yes, this time with capital letters- of our observer.

If the story was made by God, it would make no sense the expression "earth and heaven" because God does not stand anywhere, God is omnipresent. If we speak of heaven and earth it's because the observation is made from a purely human perspective, so the observer-narrator must be a man, a man, an individual, who as we saw, is standing on the earth's crust, the planet's surface, and from there he narrates.

The land is all that is under his feet -the planet- and the sky is all that is on that world, and that means the atmosphere, space, stars, the rest of the universe and other universes -if there are any-; everything, absolutely everything, including the world of ideas and the laws governing the behavior of creation, such as the laws of physics, chemistry, etc., etc., etc.

I would like to mention something to you now. One of my children, the youngest, aged nine, told me: *"Why didn't God do everything with magic? As He can do anything he wants just by clicking (thundering) his fingers."*

Yes, I know, children's questions...

Yes, I thought, and why can't Creation happen like that? Why doesn't God do things by magic?

And it occurred to me that maybe what happens is that we have become so accustomed to the magic of God, that it does not shock us anymore. It is possible that, as science has discovered some of the mechanisms of this Grand Wizard's tricks and also the mechanisms that make these "tricks", at one point we have come to think that anyone can do them.

But clearly not everyone can create a solar system, not even in six billion years.

Following these readings and reflections I was telling a friend about this idea of magic. I asked him: "Why do we assume that if God creates something he must do it with a magic wand? As if every morning he peeped a wand and a voice from heaven said, "Egg, chicken, egg, chicken ..." and eggs and chickens filled our farms."

God has mechanisms for all, and that's what we see every day of our lives and we do not realize: how children are born, how trees grow, how the tides rise and fall, how we breathe, how rain is generated, how the stars move, and hundreds of billions of things more.

And we are used to them. We got used to the way the world works around us; so much so that we are convinced that things have happened by chance, without any planning; that behind the Creation there isn't a Creator; that our existence is pure chance. And that, I believe, is the reason that often arises for the division between science and religion.

It would seem that what can be proven scientifically cannot be the work of God.

As if man had created, on his own, any of the laws of physics.

Newton discovered the laws that bear his name, discovered them ... not created them; there is a huge difference.

Chapter 6

5

LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Babylonians

I also thought that this observer we speak about, must have been immersed in a cultural context, obviously influenced by the myths, legends and gods of his culture and of course, exposed to other creation narratives.

If the location we propose is correct, he must have had great influences of Babylon. Knowing then what the Babylonians said in his texts on this event can be very interesting.

I transcribe below the Babylonian poem of creation called Enuma Elish (for its first two words) which begins:

*When the sky above had no name,
And the very earth beneath was not yet named,
(Then) the waters of the primordial abyss (APSU: freshwater)
and of the tumultuous Tiamat (salt water) were mingled together.*

This poem Enuma Elish, found in the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (669 BC - 627 BC), records the birth of Marduk, his heroic deeds and how he became the lord of the gods after killing his grandmother, Tiamat, from whom he snatched the Tablets of Destiny.

It reads:

"When high above heaven had not been named it had not been called with a name the mainland below; and there was just the primordial Apsu, their father, (and) Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all, mingled their waters as one body.

And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen, when none of the gods existed, and none bore a name, and no destinies were ordained; then Lahmu and Lahamu were called into being. During eternities they increased in age and height. Anshar and Kishar were formed, surpassing the others. Days passed, years accumulated. Anu was his son, a rival of his own parents, yes, Anu, Anshar's firstborn, was his equal. Anu begat Nudimmud

in her own image. Nudimmud became their parents' owner, unparalleled wise, insightful, strong and powerful, much stronger than his grandfather Anshar.

He had no rival among the gods his brothers. Together the divine brothers came and went altering Tiamat when they shook from side to side; yeah, they altered Tiamat with their hilarity in their heavenly abode.

Apsu could not stifle their cries and Tiamat was speechless at their behavior. Their actions were obnoxious to [...] their behavior was abhorrent; they became unbearable. Then Apsu, progenitor of the great gods, shouted, addressing Mummu, his vizier: "Oh Mummu, my vizier, who brightens my spirit, come with me to Tiamat.[\[9\]](#) (...)".

These verses continue maintaining the same tone as we move away from the possibility of any scientific correlation between the Enuma Elish and science.

By reading it we have seen the enormous difference between the Genesis and the other cultures of the area.

Note that there is -in the Babylonian story- the image of father and mother giving birth to creation. One idea would be normal for someone of a polytheistic culture that tries to explain the creation through a belief system that is familiar to him; where what is born must inevitably come from two parents, a male and a female.

9 - Full text in APENDIX I.

Egyptians

Perhaps we might think that the idea of creation of Genesis may have been taken from the Egyptians, because, at one point, they were the most advanced in the area at a scientific level.

Read the description of the creation by them:

"It is said that water was NUN, it was the God of Darkness, it was the beginning of everything ... but he was sleeping, only sleeping.

When he finally woke up NUN found only boredom, he was all he saw around. Neither animals nor plants, nor men ... not even gods. Then,

recognizing the immense power of creation in itself, he decided to get down to work and start with the creation of the universe.

"As he was water he began creating land; a large island of loamy soil arose from himself; it was Egypt, and he thought that, as Egypt had emerged from water, this should give it life, that's when God created the divine river, the Nile.

"NUN continued to create ... the sky, air, plants, animals and gods, but something was missing, there wasn't total darkness, but there wasn't light either. One day, from a lotus floating on the Nile came light. The flower was reluctant to open up and when it could not take it anymore, RA, the sun, came out, giving the world what it needed, that light with which to appreciate the colors, the beauty of creation and of course the time since RA would go back into the cup of lotus flower to rest during the night. RA became the most powerful god, the master of the world and also the most envied... ".

Obviously not, we can't make the correlation with science, it is impossible.

Hebrews

What about the popular cosmological notions of the Hebrews?

Let's review what the Hebrew description, design, popular idea was.

For them, the earth was founded upon the waters of the primeval ocean, Tehom, and its boundaries were washed by the waters of the ocean.

Below the earth was the abode of the dead, the *seol*, equivalent to the Greek *Hades*, the Babylonian *arallu*, as it was conceived as a hollow ground inhabited by the shades of the dead.

Above ground the solid sky was holding the upper waters. This solid firmament had gates that opened out to the waters of the flood and torrential rains.

The stars were fixed in the firmament.

Above the upper waters there was "the heaven of heavens," where God dwelt surrounded by his court, the angels, the children of God, or perhaps the family of God. This idea of divine abode became the empyrean heaven, where in the middle Ages stood the mansions of the blessed.

This popular Hebrew conception about the origin is very interesting, since although they had the text of Genesis, they did not have sufficient scientific knowledge to explain it. Therefore they made a free interpretation of the narrative and end in this confusing idea of solid skies and fixed stars in the firmament, beyond the abode of God and the angels that would be a theme rather focused on the philosophical.

It's very shocking to me to observe how the same description has, or has not, sense depending on the knowledge applied to their interpretation and how today with the information available and the ease of finding it, anyone could make a more accurate comparison than any done in previous centuries.

Now, come on ..., the text of Genesis is, at least, three thousand years old; and the fact that its pieces fall perfectly into place has to be, for me, without a doubt the work of God.

Which leads to the next thought. The Genesis has too many "coincidences" regarding what we suppose happened scientifically. And I for one do not believe in coincidences, especially when there are so many.

So how does that information reach our observer? Where does it come from? How does he get it?

Chapter 7

6

THE SACRED WRITER

To understand it better, I would like to refer to how the Catholic Church deals with the idea of the sacred writer, the writer who captures what he understands to be the word of God.

When we say that the texts are words of God, one could imagine that God has dictated the phrases that he wanted to reach readers in the author's ear; that's how

represented the authors of the sacred books are usually represented in many of the paintings seen in the churches. However, the phenomenon is much more complex. This phenomenon is called *inspiration*. But this inspiration should not be understood in the same way that a musician is inspired to create a work, but as the discrete action of God deep inside the sacred writer. This inspiration respects, as it were, the humanity of the author, his culture, his inclinations, his tastes, his writing, as Luis Heriberto Rivas explains in his book "The books and the history of the Bible. Introduction to Holy Scripture." [\[10\]](#).

That is why it can be noted that the various books of the Bible have distinctly different styles.

This is precisely because the hagiographer (such is the name given to the sacred author) is fully involved in what God commanded him to write.

"Thus, when one asks about the author of the Bible, one must take into account this double dimension: in the one hand, the author is God who inspires, on the other, it is the hagiographer who does as best as he can godly task"(Sic. Luis Heriberto Rivas. Editorial San Benito. 2008) [\[11\]](#).

I think this paragraph can elucidate the mechanism -some might say-, by which God's information reaches first the writer and then the reader of the sacred text. But anyway, it is still hard to imagine.

So I've written this fictional account with the mere intention of allowing the reader stand, if only for a moment, in the place of our famous observer.

It is important to clarify that the following story is pure fiction and that nowhere in the Bible is it specified that it happened this way.

10 - Rivas, Luis Heriberto, Los libros y la historia de la Biblia. Introducción a las Sagradas Escrituras. Editorial San Benito. 2008.

11 - Idem.

Chapter 8

7

THE OBSERVER

Contemplating creation

Fictional account that can help you understand
The way some people have received God's visions
And revelations.

Mesopotamia
Semitic Village
1000 B.C.

He was slowly regaining control, his control, control of himself, while he became aware of what had happened.

His legs trembled; his mind was a chaos of questions that demanded answers.

What did I see? What happened to me? Did I have a hallucination? Where am I? The sheep?! How long..? He thought, desperate and greatly confused.

He looked around.

The sheep! There they are!

Thank God, thank God they have not escaped!

Is it still dawn or dusk?

The day was ending and there was little light, he saw that the sun was setting but he was still confused.

His legs did not supported him He fell to his knees, leaned his hands on the floor.

I must come back home, I must come back home and tell everyone what happened to me.

The images he had seen returned to his mind as fast memories. *Have I dreamed?* He tried to focus on what was important at the time. *I must go home, back to my family, safe and with the flock.*

He had noticed it was getting dark. He took his crook and the fur that kept him warm. *I'm starving, my stomach hurts from hunger*—he had not eaten since leaving home that morning, and the day was over. *Water, water, I need to drink.*

He ran to the creek that was a few meters away, and squatted. He took great gulps as if they were the last and felt better. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve as he stood. He was exhausted as if he'd run a race.

He was slowly beginning to relax.

Everything seemed in order. He gathered the sheep and drove them to the hut where he lived.

He arrived an hour later, hurrying under the moonlight.

He locked them in the pen.

Elam had a wife, Misur, and two children, a boy of eight and a girl of six.

Upon hearing the sheep enter the pen the children ran to greet their father. In the dark, they hugged him and Elam lifted Samud, the girl, and grabbed the oldest, Urkis', hand.

- Mom was worried because you did not show up -Urkis said.

Misur had already left the house and went to meet him.

- Husband, did anything happen to you? -in Misur's face the concern was palpable.

- Oh my wife, let's go inside as I must tell you my day. You should hear what happened to me.

- Did an animal attack you? Are you all right? Are you hurt? Have you had a problem with the sheep...?

- No woman. Stay calm. Make me something to eat, please, I have not eaten all day and I'm starving.

Elam took a piece of bread and poured some wine while he waited for Misur to prepare him something to eat. He sat on a bench, began to relax and fatigue became noticeable. Taking a deep breath, he leaned on the table and ate.

He did not know where to begin to tell her what had happened. Misur urged him:

- Tell me, tell me, my husband.

- I'll do it, woman. I went as usual to the pastures, beside the stream. I sat on the rock, the one from which I can watch over the sheep, you know which one I mean. The sun began to rise on the horizon, the air was still, there were almost no sounds, the animals grazed in total tranquility and a moment later ... everything was gone.

I was enveloped in darkness, I could tell that there was something like a sea, in which I was submerged, and all around me there was a huge mess, as if everything were mixed. I could not see where it began and where it ended. It was like being in a sandstorm in the middle of the night. I felt I was floating over an abyss, I saw no ground under my feet, and over that sea I could clearly feel the presence of God.

Light arose suddenly, the light came from somewhere but I could not see where.

The light that was kindled moved, it crossed over me like the sun crosses. And when it was behind me the darkness returned like the night.

When I woke it was evening, it was getting dark and I could not realize how much time had passed...

Tell me, woman, was it just today or was I absent a few days?

- It was only today. This morning you left home and you have returned tonight as always. Stay calm. Finish eating and go to sleep, rest, perhaps it was only a dream, Misur told him in a vain attempt to make him feel better and calmer.

- No, it wasn't a dream -Elam said with determination, as he stood and walked around the room, clearly upset. I'm sure it was to do with God, I can feel it.

She could see that this event had affected him and did not know what to do; she did not know how to proceed in such cases.

If Elam had really had a revelation of God it was necessary to tell the priest of the temple, he would know if it had been a dream or a message. It was possible that they would not understand the message, that they could not interpret it. Or maybe it had just been a dream.

- Let's proceed in this way -Misur told him- while you take the sheep to pasture tomorrow, as usual, I can go to town in search of the priest or one of his aides to consult them; and when you return, in the afternoon, we will know what to do.

Elam agreed. There was nothing else to do, he had to sleep, he needed rest, and he was exhausted. They put the children to bed and then they did the same.

- Woman, ask them also whether we should make sacrifices or offerings, do not forget.

The night was long for Elam, images of the day again kept coming back and he could not get them out of his head; the morning came as a relief.

He and his wife got up before dawn -the children were still asleep. They had breakfast like every morning and agreed that Misur would go to the village to see the priest.

Elam took his crook, his saddlebag with the food Misur had prepared him for the day; and he went in search of the sheep that were in the pen.

The morning was calm, the air still, the aromas familiar. He was leading the animals to pasture near the stream, as was his routine.

I will try to catch a fish that will distract me and I'll stop thinking about the vision. This time of year, some big ones go near the shore to spawn; then I could search for medicinal herbs. Yes, I will try to keep busy.

He reached the rock he usually used as a lookout; took off his backpack; repositioned the skins he used to keep warm; stretched them on the stone and sat down a moment to rest. The morning was truly peaceful...

It started to rain, torrentially; there was a lot of steam; there seemed to be no air; everything was water and mud; you could hardly tell where one began and where the other ended.

He was not wet; all that moisture did not affected him. Nothing that happened in front of his eye had any effect on him. He did not feel hot neither cold. He could not see the sky, as the fog-steam was impenetrable.

Slowly the atmosphere became clear, the rain became less intense. Steam was fading. Elam could see how the water was collected in the ground and the sky become discernible. There were still many clouds, but he could see the sky. The ground was a quagmire, a huge bath.

He came to; the vision disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

Once more it was late, again about the same time as the day before.

Elam took his head.

Am I going crazy? What about the sheep?

There they were, perfectly well together; quiet, as if someone had been watching while he had his new vision.

Elam went from happiness to horror. Happiness because he realized that what happened was God's will; he could feel it, he felt it clearly as if someone had told him, but at the same time he felt fear.

Why me? Why God chose to show me this? And what is He showing me? I can't understand it. What else will He show me? What else will I have to face?

There were too many questions, too many and not one answer.

He took his things, searched for the sheep and lowered them as fast as he could to his house, almost running.

He needed to talk to the priest. It was imperative to speak with a person of God, someone who had experience in this type of events and could tell what was going to happen or what to expect, or something, anything, anything that could restore tranquility.

Yes, sure, if Misur hasn't been into town to see the priest I will go right now, I cannot wait -he was desperate.

He came home and got the sheep in the pen, pushing them.

- Come on, come on, go inside! -he shouted. Misur! Misur! I'm home!

Misur came to the door, under the eaves, and shouted:

- Husband! Come! Come closer the priest has come and is waiting!

- Thank God, my wife.

Elam, quieter -because the priest was there- washed his perspiration in a trough and entered his house.

Crossing the threshold, he met the priest and his assistant who were sitting at the table and they stood to greet him when they saw him. Misur was standing to the side, near the entrance.

After greeting them, Elam asked the priest and his assistant to sit down and asked Misur about their children. She told him that on her way to town she had left them at her parents'.

Elam told them the events of the previous day and the new vision he had seen that day. And also how these events had left him upset and worried.

The men listened attentively without comment. When Elam concluded his narrative the priest was silent for a moment, as if he was clarifying his thoughts, and then said:

- My son, it's clear that these visions you've had can come from God. At this time I still cannot understand the message, or if it refers to future or past events. We may need to wait for a signal from God to clarify the issue. Anyway, you should stay calm; if it comes from God it cannot be bad. If you do not mind, we'd like to stay with you a few days to see if anything else occurs, and to accompany you. We can stay wherever you say so as not to be a bother; we'd hate to interfere with your daily routine, or be a burden to you and your family.

Elam was surprised, this was much more than he could have expected. Although he was very religious he was not a practicing member of the cult, we might say; he didn't have the habit of going to the temple, and had not dealt with the priest before these events.

He offered to the religious men the children's rooms, as these would stay at their grandparents; and if necessary, they could leave them there for a few days.

They dined trying to talk about trivial matters.

Elam and Misur were not wealthy. They were only shepherds, so they didn't have many comforts to share; and could not afford to stop working either. Elam had to continue with his life and work as usual while this whole issue was resolved.

When they were about to retire to bed, the priest approached Elam and said:

- Son, I have a vague idea about what the visions you've had could be; I cannot say anything yet, but I am convinced that there is still something for you to see. If I'm right this could take, at least, another day or two. I pray you have strength and faith in God. If He has chosen you it is because he knows you can cope with what you have been entrusted. Remember He knows you better than you know yourself. We will accompany you at all times. God is testing you and I'm sure you will succeed. Go to sleep and rest. Tomorrow is another day.

He added.

- If you do not mind, we'd like to go with you to the field without interfering with your work.

- Thanks Master, I really appreciate it, you do not know how much that means to me.

- I understand, son. Go to sleep and try to relax and not worry about us.

Misur spent the night watching Elam. If he was sleeping, if he moved, if he breathed. It was impossible not to notice how worried she was about her husband.

The first light of dawn saw them eating breakfast; they got ready to start the day in silence. Elam could feel the anxiety of the priest and his assistant, despite their efforts to hide it.

He saw how they were going from one place to another accommodating what they had to carry and speaking softly, almost in a whisper, so as not to disturb.

Elam knew that for them this was a unique opportunity, perhaps what they had expected and for which they would have prepared all his life.

They are happy, it shows; and I just want it to end. God forgive me, not that I don't want to be helpful; it's just that I'm just terrified and I fear I will let you down. Please give me the strength to overcome your test.

- Are you well, husband? -Misur asked quietly, once the others had left and they had a moment of privacy.

- Yes, do not worry my wife. Everything will be fine, they are going to come with me. I will try to bring some fish because yesterday I could not. Perhaps this has already happened. Stay quiet woman.

He went in search of the herd and began his routine. The priest and his assistant followed him, but stood aloof trying not to intervene; it was clear they were trying to be just mere observers.

Elam was leaning on his crook and herding the sheep to pasture.

God have mercy on me, have clemency. I pray that all is well. Give me strength; take care of my wife and my children. Do not take me yet, let me see my children grow and help them start their adult lives.

Absorbed in his thoughts, he found himself on the edge of the pasture.

The monks remained at a distance, in silence.

- Come on sheep, eat the pastures! Now, now! -Elam told the animals, while gesturing with his arms and his crook visibly as he did not want them scattered.

He repositioned the skins and settled his pack on the rock; he sat down to rest as he watched the sheep scamper and graze peacefully.

The sky was slightly overcast.

I don't think it will rain, although a little rain could do the plants a lot of good. I hope the children are well with their grandparents. Thank God for my family. Thank you for this day.

You could hear the whisper of the nearby stream water and the cries of some birds that passed by flying not too high. *How do they float in the air?* Elam followed them with his eyes. He had almost forgotten his companions for the day...

The sky changed abruptly. The clouds closed. Although it wasn't raining the impression was that it had rained recently and that it would rain again shortly.

The ground was wet and it was a swamp, a marsh, but the water was dripping, dripping and it was collecting in one place; it seemed that the ground rose and dried and the water flowed creating a sea, an ocean. Elam was witnessing the separation of air, water and land into firmament, sea and dry land. He could feel he stood on dry soil and saw the sea along the beach. The place was not a swamp anymore. Although he saw no vegetation or animals at least the general landscape was more familiar. Barren, very dry, but familiar.

He was standing on the grass among the sheep. He touched his face and body as if he were recognizing himself.

Again, it happened again. The sheep? Yes, here they are. God, God looks after them on my behalf.

Taking a deep breath he rubbed his eyes, as if waking from a dream. He walked to the stream to drink. No hurry. He knelt on the bank and stood for a moment still, doing nothing. He looked at his image in the water and then cupped his hands to catch some. He drank slowly. Then he washed his face and wet his hair and neck, massaging them gently.

The monks were watching from afar in absolute silence.

He gathered his things and started herding the animals. A short distance away, the priest and his assistant were watching. The priest with a slight wave of his hand said to his assistant to do nothing, to not intervene. Elam went near them herding sheep and all returned to the house.

The return was quiet and unhurried, almost like another day of many.

Finally, upon arrival, Elam left the sheep in the pen and passing beside the priest said:

- Come in, master, eat something and I'll tell you what I saw.

Misur, as he entered the house, wanted to know:

- You've had another vision -it was more a statement than a question. You are tired, my husband. Sit, for I have prepared something for everyone to eat.

The woman looked at the religious men, as asking their opinion.

The priest and his assistant quietly took off their backpacks and left their stuff on the floor, in a corner. Then they went to wash for dinner.

Elam sat on a stool and leaned on the table.

- Woman. I had another vision. When the religious men return I will tell them about it.

As they ate, Elam narrated what he had seen. The priest told Misur that Elam had walked across the meadow looking at things they had failed to see. They told how Elam had been watching his feet, watching the sky, and how, at times, he would stretch his hands as if to touch something. They also commented that the sheep were kept close and quiet at all times. No one left the herd nor were they attacked by a predator.

Finally, the priest told Elam:

- Son. You have to be quiet. I'm sure the hardest is over. You must be glad to be chosen by God to receive this message. There will be time to interpret it. Meanwhile rest. We, for our part, will pray to God to give you the necessary strength and clarity of mind and spirit you need. Rejoice. What comes from God must be good.

She turned and said to his assistant:

- Let us retire to our room. Let these people in peace. We all need rest.

It dawned. A new day began. *Again, what about today? What will happen? Will it already be over? Please God have mercy on me and my family.*

Elam got up and prepared as usual; the others did their thing.

Misur prepared them food for the day. She greeted them at the door as they left, her left hand squeezing her clothes.

They reached the pastures quickly, without a hitch.

Here I am, once again. Every time I look at the grass, the mountains, the desert, the streams, the birds, I think, how has God created all this...

From the land plants sprouted; plants became trees; trees bore fruits; and fruits bore seeds. What was arid became green, green and diverse. He was gradually surrounded by such lush vegetation he could not see the sky.

And the pasture was back, and the sheep with it.

That's how He did it, that's how! That's it, that is what He is showing me! I'm seeing and witnessing how God created all that exists! God is showing me Creation!

He sought the religious men with his eyes.

- I know what I see! I know what God is showing me! -he knelt and held his head with both hands.

- It's perfect, it is impressive -he whispered.

The monks ran to him and knelt beside him.

- Tell us son, please tell us.

- God is showing me Creation! God shows me how He did it all! ... It is the original chaos, how He organized it, how He separated the water from the earth, light and darkness, day and night, plants, trees... I think my head will explode.

They laughed and cried. The religious men hugged and tried to calm him.

- Calm child. Get him something to eat -the priest asked the assistant.

He trotted to where the backpacks were and returned with some bread and water.

Elam told them what he had seen and how the earth had moved from the extreme aridity to the lush vegetation in front of their eyes. There was so much forest, so many trees that he could not even see the sky.

They returned.

- Misur, Misur! -he entered the house. I know what this is about! -he grabbed her by the shoulders. God is showing me the Creation, how he created the earth and all things that live in it. Today He has shown me how He created the plants! Sit down and I'll tell you; it was wonderful, amazing...

The next day they were there again.

Elam repositioned the skins on the rock. He looked for a piece of bread -the walk had made him hungry. The monks were a few hundred feet away in the same place where they had been the day before, and they pretended not to watch. He sat up and stretched his arms.

What a beautiful day...

He came out of the trees and saw the sun passing swiftly over him, and then the moon and the stars. The days and nights followed at a rapid pace. Days passed, then years, centuries, millennia.

- That's why they are there! -he shouted, looking to the monks. To count the days and years!

The monks regarded him blankly and came almost jogging.

- That's what the Sun and the Moon are for! God created them so we could count the time! For us to know how many years have passed! To separate the light from the darkness, so we rest at night and work during the day! He tells us that the stars were made for a purpose, to help us... It's wonderful. Everything has a reason. Everything has a purpose.

And evening came and the fifth day dawned...

And there he was again in the meadow with his sheep.

He tucked his stuff on the rock and rubbed his face to wake up.

He leaned back and put his hands on his thighs, looking at the creek. *What do you have for me today, my God...?*

Water, lots of it, full of fish, small, big. And birds in the sky, plenty, fluttering. The cries filled the air.

Enormous sea creatures, huge, giant, monstrous. Some went to the land, crawled like snakes conquering the mainland. The sea was teeming with life, diverse life, and immense diversity. Birds were nesting on earth and breeding; the world was full of life.

There were many, too many; he could not follow all these creatures, so different and so similar. So many... so many...

The beach disappeared. Elam was thrown back on the grass. With his hands he groped what was beside him. He sought the sand, which was gone, as he watched the sky for birds. He closed his eyes in an attempt to retain the images. *More, more.*

He sat.

- Sea animals!, Huge animals!, Sea monsters!, Monstrous, huge! -he laughed. And the days. Each day corresponds to a day of Creation, my days are the days that it took him to achieve it! That's why he shows it to me fragmented. It is very important that we take notice of the days!

He paused in his speech for breath.

- How many days have passed? -he asked them.

The priest was at his side and sat nearby.

- With this, five -he answered.

- Five, five ... how many days will God have dedicated to this, how many days are left?

- What about the man? -the assistant asked- what about the man?

- I do not know. He has not shown me yet, I have not seen him...

Evening came. Sixth day dawned.

He knelt. He left his staff and prayed, crouched with his head almost on the ground and joined hands.

God, my God, let me see your greatness, show me Your Creation. Have mercy on your humble servant. Give me the strength to serve You...

The sea and the dry land appeared and on it land animals, small, large, all the species. The land was full of life. And God was satisfied.

And man appeared. He ruled over animals, dominating them. Men and women walking together.

These men and women ate the fruits of the trees and the seeds of plants, and animals grazed on the plains. God provided food for all. Fruits and seeds for men and herbs for animals. And God looked at his creation and saw that it was perfect.

Elam came to on the edge of the stream. He looked around as if trying to figure out where he was.

He took a couple of steps back, turned and started walking away from the water.

- Man! God created man in his image, male and female!

He felt drunk, intoxicated. In a state of bliss. Happy. He told them:

- Let's go back, go home, I want to see Misur; I want to tell her, I want to describe what I saw.

His eyes conveyed love, love, compassion, understanding.

They returned.

- Misur, my wife, I have seen the creation of man and animals. God said, "Let us make man like us, and rule over all animals, fish and birds." God created man in his own image, male and female. And he created them with love, with the love of a father and blessed them, "Be fruitful and multiply." And he added: "I give them seed herbs and fruit trees to eat, and to the animals, birds and fish, the green grass as sustenance." And God saw everything that he had made, and it was fine. Misur, my wife, I can feel the love of God for his creation, for us, for each herb, for each bird.

His voice cracked with emotion, he could not stop crying.

The priest and his assistant bowed and prayed.

- Thank God, thank God.

Evening came. Seventh day dawned...

He walked up to the stone where he left his things, as if someone was going out to meet someone. He repositioned the skins, left the crook on the ground, leaned his backpack on the stone and sat down. He closed his eyes and waited...

The work was completed. The earth, the heavens and all elements and beings. And God ceased on the seventh day all the work he had done. He blessed and sanctified it.

Her eyes sought them. There they were. He staggered, leaned against the rock with one hand.

Am I about to die? Something or someone is leaving me, I feel dizzy. I am afraid, God do not take me yet. It's over. There's nothing more. What was with me is gone. I do not feel well.

He called the priest with his hand and said:

- Let's go back. It's over. Today is a rest day. The seventh day shall be holy. It is the day when God finishes Creation. We shall not work. What God gave me is over. He's gone. I do not feel very well -his thoughts were confused.

- Calm down son, the morning is not yet over, let's go to the house to eat something and you'll feel better -he motioned to his assistant to take Elam's things.

They herded the sheep and Elam started feeling better as they approached the farm.

Misur was in the garden weeding. She ran to them.

- Why have you returned so early!
- God told me that today is a day of rest, that we should not work. It is the day He finished Creation, the seventh day. Leave the tools, woman, do as He said.
- What about tomorrow?
- Tomorrow we have to work again, but there will be no more messages, wife. I feel it is over. I have the feeling that what was with me these seven days is gone. I feel different and tired, very tired.

By the meager light of oil lamp -in his room at the temple- the priest finished writing what Elam had narrated day by day.

He waited for the ink to dry -blowing gently- and then rolled the papyrus with great care and reverence. He tied it with string and put it in the trunk of the temple's sacred possessions.

It was necessary to rest; in the morning he should start the long journey to the main temple where he would tell what had happened to the high priest.

Chapter 9

8

MESSAGE AND TEACHING

Well, I hope this little story I have retold serves to better understand what that vision, that revelation might have been.

We now have a clearer idea about what could have happened, what he had actually narrated and about one more thing: the reason for the days.

When I thought about writing the story of what the observer saw, I immediately considered the dilemma of the seven days. I thought: what if the seven days were not God's days but the observer's? Or both? Again, what if ...?.

And yes, it would make sense. It is a lot of information to receive in one day and also if it was given to the observer in seven sessions, we could consider that the narrative was told in seven days. Maybe that was the case because God probably desired to generate the need to divide the narrative by days, because there is a reason for the seven days -from a religious point of view- which we will discuss below.

Let's see the religious side of the story.

The first thing the sacred author says is: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; in this phrase he gives us the key that we must use to understand the text, and in turn, he tries to express the synthesis of everything that he is going to describe in detail. We have seen that by integrating heavens and earth he attempts to cover everything, all that exist; and that by mentioning heavens and earth again at the end, he draws our attention to the purely human and earthly perspective of the narrator.

It is also possible that, due to the fact the word *kosmos* is of Greek origin; and because in the Hebrew language there is no word that corresponds exactly to that idea, he uses this redundancy of heavens and earth. For me, it is clear that by bundling everything he is including the intangible, as the world of ideas and the laws governing the systems.

It is assumed that the hagiographer, the sacred author, besides telling a conceivable view, would intend to catechize, to give a lesson in theology in a simple and direct way, in a language that may have been popular to simple-minded people. Do not forget that this must have happened a thousand years before Christ, and that the scientific knowledge of that time was extremely low.

At the same time there is something very important; he is transmitting that God did this and God did that, God as singular, as one. This is not a minor issue, on the contrary, because at that time polytheism prevailed in different cultures. It didn't occurred to anyone, or they found difficult to accept that everything was the work of one God, for He creates animals, plants and man and nothing else, not does He at any time make other gods or demigods, or anything of the sort.

The message and lesson left after reading it should be loud and clear: God is one and, moreover, it is pre-existing; He existed before the origin of the world.

This teaching of "one God" continues throughout the Bible and leads to Jesus; it is the theme of the story and the chosen people's reason for being; but let's not stray.

Let's carry on with the Genesis.

The next sentence is also very significant: "a wind of God hovered over the waters." This gives us the feeling that God's presence is almost tangible; that the author feels the spirit of God above the initial chaos, He cannot only see but also feel, perceive the existing intention behind the work.

Then he begins the description of creation. Here it is important to emphasize that the hagiographer possibly cared more for the doctrinal and religious aspects of the narrative than for its scientific side, obviously. First, because he may not have understood the scientific part; and second, because if he understood it he could not tell anyone because no one would have understood.

To me it is obvious that the author is unable to fully understand what he is seeing, because he believes in some basic concepts of his time, like that the sky was solid, or that the stars, the sun and the moon were gods, etc.

Moreover, he remains still along the transformations and everything happens around him. For him, the place in which he stands is the center of the universe and the sun, the moon and the stars move around it. That was the general idea, shared by scholars, to the point that the belief that the Earth was the center of the universe prevailed beyond 1600 AD. If anyone doubts, we can ask Galileo Galilei, who uttered the famous phrase *Eppur si muove* or *E pur si muove* ("And yet it moves") after abjure the heliocentric view of the world to the court of the Inquisition on June 22, 1633 in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, which cost him house arrest.

The heliocentric vision (from the Greek: *helios* - sun, center) placed the sun at the center of the system and the Earth as one of the planets revolving around the star.

I find it interesting to note that we usually judge the Inquisition as totally irrational and wild, but in this case -it struck me- the Church condemns him to "house arrest", without even sending him to prison! This is not a minor issue; Galileo was moving mankind from his place, the maximum creation of God, the center of creation! And still, they only sentenced him to house arrest? ...!?

Well, let's continue.

Many times we find that Genesis commentators wonder why the author does not speak of the creation of darkness but of the creation of light; and they try to explain

it, in general, arguing that darkness is associated with evil and light with good; but in the text there is no reason to believe that darkness represents evil; it's simply that before the light it was dark and after the light it was not.

I think we should remember that outer space is dark by nature because it lacks atmosphere and the light has no way to spread and create that feeling of being surrounded by light that is so familiar to us.

It is important -critical we might say- not to forget that when talking of Genesis and, obviously, of the Bible, we are usually in the area of religion. Therefore the text tries to leave -at all times- religious teachings to those who read it, as that's the main reason of all these writings' existence: to lead man in his spiritual journey.

At last, when the time of the creation of man comes, he says: "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea ...". Behold the most accurate reference of man as God's representative before what was created on earth; that he will command about animals and plants, and that this allocation entails the enormous responsibility of caring for them.

I happened to find people who, mistaking this paragraph, feel entitled to do anything to animals and plants because "God sent them" ...!? The famous "*power*"... It is clear that we can misinterpret sacred texts and adapt them to our interests or needs as we see fit, but we should not do so.

God is above all a merciful and loving father, and nowhere does He give the mandate that we can mistreat animals or subjugate others; quite the opposite. Just read the teachings of Jesus and His exhortations: "*Love your neighbor as yourself*", "*forgive seventy times seven*." In fact, we should not overlook His intention that sustenance should be vegetarian, as the hagiographer remarks: "Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food. And to all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage of the plants as their food ". In this paragraph it is clear the intention to convey the idea, indication or teaching that -as plants are there for sustenance- man must protect and respect all animal life.

Undoubtedly man, being intelligent, can make that discrimination -discrimination that animals are unable to perform. However, after the flood we feel that God is

resigned to the view that it is too much to ask, "Never again will I curse the earth because of human beings, because their heart contrives evil from their infancy. Never again will I strike down every living thing as I have done "(Genesis 8:21), and thereafter He allows them to eat animals (Genesis 9:1-5).

Well, beyond what we have for lunch, it is interesting to notice that God is presented in the Bible as a loving, merciful father who gives up His designs or renews them depending on the struggles with His children, with this Humanity, with His obstinate chosen people, as we read throughout the Old Testament more than once.

Chapter 10

9

TRANSCENDENTAL CONTENT

The doctrinal content of the story, the lessons that persist after we finish reading it, the theological lessons we might call fundamental could include:

- God is the only Creator of all things, of all the concrete and abstract, of what is above and what is below, of all entities and creatures. All matter, and the forces acting on it are created by Him and respond to His mandate.
- The power of God, omnipotent and omnipresent, is an expression of His intelligence and wisdom, reflected in the order, balance and functioning of creation.
- Every creature is good for it has been created according to that idea of order and perfection. They are created by God, they are created by parts of God but they are not God. This distinction, this separation is crucial because it is very subtle, and can be easy to confuse Creator and creature. God creates everything from itself, thus we would all be part of God, but we are not God; we are ultimately His creation. At this point the comment that a student of the Bhagavad Gita, the sacred book of Hinduism, is interesting: "A comparison that allows us to clarify this separation between Creator and creature would be the fruit of the pomegranate. Grains within the pomegranate are part of the grenade but not the grenade. They are part of the fruit but they are not fruit."

- The stars, which at the time were recognized as gods, are clearly objects created by God; He decides how they move; and the purpose of their passage through the universe is helping men tell the time.
- The fertility of animals is a blessing from God and part of the machinery, the operation of the system; there is no deity responsible for that, it's just functionality.
- Man -we might call him creation's summit- is the only one made in the image and likeness of God and is therefore special and rises above the rest of living things; this immediately gives him rights and obligations.
- And finally, this one, in gratitude and as second to God, should keep one day a week to worship him, resting as God Himself did, the seventh day.

In these key ideas -that the sacred author gives us so accurately and in as few lines- there is a true revelation of antiquity which no other ancient civilization gave us. No other people dwelling the earth at the time came to an explanation as close to scientific truth as the Hebrew, the chosen people.

It is clear to me that the hagiographer in these first lines of Genesis attempts to explain the origin of the world but not from a scientific perspective but from the point of view of the relationship between creation and God. Everything is God's work, both the world and space, the stars, the forces, ideas and whatever is there and we cannot yet see. Heaven and earth.

Everything is reasoned and logical, to the point that the original chaos seems to be the original matter of a work of art, a sculpture's putty, canvas and paints; but with the detail of free will, a great little detail; one detail that is not minor; one detail that makes a huge difference and gives us an accurate idea of the infinite mercy and love of the Creator.

His work would not be the same without freedom, without the vaunted free will; that free will that has brought humanity to make such large and important achievements and to commit so many regrettable mistakes.

It's clear that God is not interested in beings who act like robots, nor cares for uniformity; hence, He has created this huge diversity of animals, plants, and humans of different colors, languages, carvings and thoughts, philosophies which even have different perceptions of Him -Who is the same for everyone.

In the context of free will, it is truly wonderful to see in the Bible how God dictates the rules; then gets angry because humanity does not do what He commands; then rebukes; forgives; amends laws He had set to see if this time man can follow them...

which usually does not occur. Then again, disappointed and angry because they don't -they don't change their ways- He modifies them, makes them harder, makes them more permissive. He changes dangerous toys like pagan gods by ideas closer to those of a single god; and removes from the game those who clearly cannot play with the rest, as happened with the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Yes, the great Free Will -capitalized- the old free will that we cannot yet control.

We have once more strayed from the target which was a comparison of Genesis with science, but the detour is worth it, as it is good to see it in the context of the book to which it belongs and in which it plays a part.

Talking to my wife, I said that -until recently- there had not been the possibility of making this comparison of Genesis with science, because the scientific findings needed to understand what our observer talks about occurred only in recent years -with revolutionary inventions such as the Hubble telescope, radio telescopes like Arecibo and many other specialized satellites. Only now, in this time and age, you can perform a complete and thorough comparison of the text with science, and I find it truly amazing to see how they fit.

You need to understand that both the hagiographer -obviously- and the biblical commentators until about twenty years ago, have not had sufficient resources to understand and tie many loose ends.

Today, with some knowledge and a computer connected to the Internet, anyone can check what is narrated in these lines and also make new contributions to a better understanding.

It is undeniable that scientific advances of recent years and future discoveries will allow elucidating many of the mysteries that the Bible still keeps for us, although we should not forget that the real breakthrough we should aim at is always going to be spiritual.

Chapter 11

10

EDEN

Human nature in a controlled environment.

It was not me, it was you.

Very well.

So Eden?

Of course, Eden, I almost forgot.

After Genesis, and its seven days, we found a new description of creation but made on a completely different way. So much so that, in general, biblical scholars say it has a different origin, another author, and it was probably written at another time.

In this new description there is a different line of facts.

Why not read the paragraph and analyze it?

«At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven there was as yet no wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant yet sprung up, for Yahweh God had not sent rain on the earth, nor was there any man to till the soil. Instead, water flowed out of the ground and watered all the surface of the soil. Yahweh God shaped man from the soil of the ground and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being.

«Yahweh God planted a garden in Eden, which is in the east, and there He put the man He had fashioned.

«From the soil, Yahweh God caused to grow every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

«A river flowed from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided to make four streams. The first is named the Pishon, and this winds all through the land of Havilah where there is gold. The gold of this country is pure; bdellium and cornelian stone are found there. The second river is named the Gihon, and this winds all through the land of Cush. The third river is named the Tigris, and this flows to the east of Ashur. The fourth river is the Euphrates. Yahweh God took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden to cultivate and take care of it. Then Yahweh God gave the man this command, "You are free to eat of all the trees in the garden. But

of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you are not to eat; for, the day you eat of that, you are doomed to die”.

«Yahweh God said, “It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper”. So from the soil Yahweh God fashioned all the wild animals and all the birds of heaven. These He brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it.

«The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild animals. But no helper suitable for the man was found for him. Then, Yahweh God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And, while he was asleep, He took one of his ribs and closed the flesh up again forthwith. Yahweh God fashioned the rib He had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said: “This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh! She is to be called Woman [\[12\]](#), because she was taken from Man”. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh. Now, both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame before each other.» (Genesis 2:5-25).

12 - In some translations instead of "woman" it says Varona ['ishshah]: "And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: this shall be called Woman ['ishshah], because of the man ['ish] it was taken. This is now bone of my bones "(Genesis 2: 23).

Adam, recognizing in her the desired partner, joyfully welcomed her as his bride and expressed his joy in a poetic exclamation. The words "this is now" reflect his pleasant surprise when he saw in the woman the fulfillment of his heart's desire.

The triple repetition of "this" (as it is in Hebrew) vividly points to her as whom he was now admiring -with joyous amazement- with the intense excitement of first love.

Instinctively, or as a result of divine instruction, he recognized in her a part of his own being. Thereafter he should love her as his own body as by loving her he loves himself.

The Apostle Paul emphasizes this truth: "So husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself "(Ephesians 5: 28).

«Now, the snake was the most subtle of all the wild animals that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, “Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?” The woman answered the snake, “We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it,

under pain of death". Then the snake said to the woman, "No! You will not die! God knows in fact that the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good from evil". The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye; and that it was enticing for the wisdom that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together to make themselves loin cloths.

«The man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees of the garden. But Yahweh God called to the man. "Where are you?" He asked. "I heard the sound of you in the garden", he replied. "I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid". "Who told you that you were naked?" He asked. "Have you been eating from the tree I forbade you to eat?" The man replied, "It was the woman you put with me; she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it". Then Yahweh God said to the woman, "Why did you do that?" The woman replied, "The snake tempted me and I ate". Then Yahweh God said to the snake, "Because you have done this, accursed be you of all animals wild and tame! On your belly you will go and on dust you will feed as long as you live. I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel". To the woman He said: "I shall give you intense pain in childbearing, you will give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will dominate you". To the man He said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, accursed be the soil because of you! Painfully will you get your food from it as long as you live. It will yield you brambles and thistles, as you eat the produce of the land. By the sweat of your face will you earn your food, until you return to the ground, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you shall return".

«The man named his wife "Eve" because she was the mother of all those who live.

«Yahweh God made tunics of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them. Then Yahweh God said, "Now that the man has become like one of Us in knowing good from evil, he must not be allowed to reach out his hand

and pick from the tree of life too, and eat and live forever!” So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken. He banished the man, and in front of the garden of Eden He posted the great winged creatures and the fiery flashing sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.» (Genesis 3:1-24).

«The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. “I have acquired a man with the help of Yahweh”, she said. She gave birth to a second child, Abel, the brother of Cain.

«Now Abel became a shepherd and kept flocks, while Cain tilled the soil. Time passed and Cain brought some of the produce of the soil as an offering for Yahweh, while Abel for his part brought the first-born of his flock and some of their fat as well. Yahweh looked with favour on Abel and his offering. But He did not look with favour on Cain and his offering, and Cain was very angry and downcast.

«Yahweh asked Cain, “Why are you angry and downcast? If you are doing right, surely you ought to hold your head high! But if you are not doing right, Sin is crouching at the door, hungry to get you. You can still master it”. Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out”; and while they were in the open country, Cain set on his brother Abel and killed him. Yahweh asked Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I do not know”, he replied. “Am I my brother's guardian?” “What have you done?” Yahweh asked. “Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. Now be cursed and banned from the ground that has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hands. When you till the ground it will no longer yield up its strength to you. A restless wanderer you will be on earth”. Cain then said to Yahweh, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Look, today You drive me from the surface of the earth. I must hide from You, and be a restless wanderer on earth. Why, whoever comes across me will kill me!” “Very well, then”, Yahweh replied, “whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance”. So Yahweh put a mark on Cain, so that no one coming across him would kill him.

«Cain left Yahweh's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

«Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. He became the founder of a city and gave the city the name of his

son Enoch. Enoch fathered Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael; Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.» (Genesis 4:1-18).

It seems obvious that this description does not correspond with the general creation, but only with that of Eden and Adam and Eve.

When God created Eden, humanity had been walking in the world a long time, millions of years; so much so that after God expelled Adam and Eve from Paradise, Cain killed Abel and, as the only living child of Adam and Eve, left the presence of God and sat on the land of Nod, where he met his wife.

Here it is evident that Cain met his wife in the land of Nod because there were women there to be met; and because there were other countries where women lived, other women who were of course not relatives of Adam and Eve. They were part of other peoples, the peoples that were not God's chosen people; because in order to choose a people there had to be other options, which were "the other", the other men and women, the original, which had been generated during the overall creation of species, those men that God created on the sixth day and lived in populations like that land of Nod mentioned in the text.

If humanity -and therefore man- existed, what is the meaning of the creation of Eden?

This point is very important, crucial I'd say.

Humanity is now fully operational, under development and activity.

It takes, at least, two million years of evolution, but -and once again but- it is walking down a wrong path, and this wrong path is polytheism.

Humans, in that spiritual youth -almost spiritual children- see a god in every force of nature, every star, and every event they cannot explain. This is natural and reasonable for children, spiritual children, so they are naturally polytheists.

Apparently this polytheism is not wrong in the beginning of the world; it is indeed almost normal, almost inevitable. But, for some reason, it is clear, at that point in history God decides it is time to take the next step, understanding the meaning of monotheism and adopting it. It is time to discard the facets, the biases of divinity, and replace them with the more advanced idea of one God, a single God. This new idea, this new belief in one single God is monotheism.

It is interesting to note and observe that, although in most of the planet people had and worshipped many gods, in China and India they did not. China and India, at the time when the chosen people entered the picture, were already monotheists. It is necessary to understand Hindu philosophy to understand that they already were monotheists and, of course, still are. In India God is everything, but not as pantheism understands it but from the closer view of panentheism. Although they sound similar, pantheism and panentheism are spiritually different approaches. Pantheism can become atheist -atheistic pantheism-; but not panentheism, which is a more complex understanding of God, the divinity, as one, omnipresent and omniscient. China and India already had the idea of a moral and just God above all things, not only unique but moral. His philosophy was based on the correct action -*dharma* in India- and on *karma* as the result of one's acts.

This philosophy stands to this day, and it is observed in both Hinduism and Buddhism, which can be considered a new and current derivation of the first, based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama the Buddha.

It is possible that due to the type of philosophy they followed, Indians and Chinese did not resist the idea of monotheism when Catholic missionaries arrived in the land, in more modern times. And perhaps also for the same reason, God has not sent the disciples of Jesus to catechize Asia. Moreover, at some point the Holy Spirit explicitly prohibits the apostles to go to Asia. To better understand it is good to read the words of Jesus when He sends His disciples after the lost sheep, both of His own people, the Jews, and of the Gentiles, the "other", all of them polytheistic. Naturally, it was not worth wasting time with those who already had the knowledge -those who were monotheistic-, that is why the spread of Christianity occurs from Pakistan to the West, bypassing India and China.

The first time I noticed it, that I noticed this "detail" -when I compared the world map and overlaid it with the initial expansion area, the area of influence of Christianity- I was in shock.

Of course, the God of the Hebrews was and is the same as that of Asia, so why waste time?

So, summing up, we have man diverting to a malicious polytheism -we might call it wild- with human sacrifices and identification of God with vile, low aspects; so it was necessary to stop and redirect this diversion and, at the same time, take the next step of spiritual growth towards the adult form of monotheism, to the knowledge of the one God.

It seems to me that this is precisely the reason for the creation of the chosen people, the Jewish people, who will be in charge of first purifying those peoples that no longer have a chance to join the new "monotheistic system" -so to speak- and then imposing the belief in Yahweh, their God, the only God.

For this purpose God, as a first step, makes the place from where the first humans will come out, Eden, a new pristine place, on which He first puts the man, made from the dust of the ground. This dust is all a metaphor. Let us pause for a moment on that idea: the man made of dust from the ground. If we recall the comments in the original creation, that everything we are is part of the original nebula -that cosmic dust generated in the furnaces of supernovae- there is no doubt that we are just that: soil dust: dust plus the breath of life from God, the soul, the spirit.

After God created this new man apart from "the other", surrounds him with a garden, trees, plants, and animals.

It is interesting to compare and conclude that this creation is totally different from the original, the first. In this, man is the first to be created -because he was the most important in this phase- and then God deals with the accessory, plants and animals.

But -there is always a but- He puts in their way the tree of good and evil, about which He warns them, very clearly, not to eat the fruit under penalty of certain death.

Well, we have almost completed the scene, the man, his environment, and something forbidden ... what's missing? Yes, something is missing, we need women. Without women, the stage, the replica of what was happening outside of Eden, would have been incomplete.

We now have everything, the woman, who is part of the man, of one of his ribs, with which they form one flesh in the union that is beyond explanation; and the rest of the environment.

What now?

The drama.

The temptation.

She turns on the machine, and makes human nature remain in evidence.

Ah yes ... the temptation never well weighted...

Remember ...

"Now, Both of them were naked, the man and his wife, but they felt no shame before each other.

"Now, the snake was the most subtle of all the wild animals that Yahweh God had made. It asked the woman, "Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?"...

So great is the separation between these two beings and the rest of those who already inhabited the planet, who have no idea of the slightest customs, or of the feeling of shame, for they were naked, and, of course, that did not affect them at all. Then the snake appears: evil, temptation, doubt, rebellion, but -yes, again but... our beloved but- nothing would have happened if human nature did not exist. Precisely, this whole scenario is mounted to show human nature, for us to become aware of our nature and try to tame it. Without this component the snake would have found a resounding NO and everything would have ended there. But... it didn't happened; the free will God has given us and our rebellious nature is, was, and will be the perfect combination to get us in trouble. And it did. Not only Eve ate, but Adam ate, and both ended thrown from Paradise -right out in the street, as my wife would say.

Right.

Now, let's look a little more closely at this whole play.

First the threat.

This threat is not small; if they eat they will die because God is going to kill them; not because it will do them wrong, they will have stomachache or something ... no, they will die because that is the law that God established: eating = death penalty.

And there goes the unconsciousness, not being aware of the seriousness of the threat; how serious, delicate and dangerous it is to contradict what God says.

Naïve Adam and Eve heard nothing of what God said, but heeded the serpent, who skillfully explains that there is nothing to fear. She tells them that God just does not want to share with them the gifts of the gods, and there appears the human folly. Fools are naturally stupid, no doubt.

Did God know what was going to happen? I think so, He just wanted to show it to us and prove it with facts.

In Eden there was no one to ask or from whom be badly influenced; they were alone, alone with the object of desire, the law and the temptation to contradict it.

With that, there was more than enough; there was no need for anything else, which was amply demonstrated.

What now? Now awareness of what is right and what is wrong arises, but knowingly, not like before when God had specified: they can do this and not that. Now they must decide what is right and what is wrong and take the consequences, or at least, they should bear the consequences.

So there they are sewing leaves to clothes.

At one point they are pitiful. They look like children who have done a mischief and now do not know how to fix it; and to make matters worse they are ashamed to be naked, so they hid from God.

God walks the Eden as if He knew nothing, like a father who obviously knew what had happened -how wouldn't He? Come on, He is God!- and asks: Where are you?, As if He were playing hide and seek with a child.

This scene reminds me of many games and situations I have had with my children. The typical: what have you done? -a completely rhetorical question because I already knew what he had done-, but it was just necessary to ask to make him reflect on what he had done and so try to explain why, why he had done it and thus learn from it. And there you have God in the same situation -we must not forget that God is a loving and merciful father.

Adam replied "I heard the sound of you in the garden", he replied. "I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid"; how does he know he's naked, if a moment before they had no idea of what nudity was? And God asks: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? ". Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it wonderful how God speaks to him as to a child? If I said no, why did you do that? And there comes the explanation: "It was the woman you put with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it", so it was her fault, not mine; and You are to blame for giving her to me as my companion. Let's see ... not only does he not take responsibility but also he blames God!

If God so far was calm and tried not to get angry this must have filled up the measure of His patience.

And yes ... He is not to be blamed. It was time to grab them by the ears and ..., but God remains calm and continues: "'Why did you do that?'. The woman replied, 'The snake tempted me and I ate'. ', And yes, that snake...

And we got this far.

God said to the serpent:

«"Because you have done this, accursed be you of all animals wild and tame! On your belly you will go and on dust you will feed as long as you

live. I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel".

«To the woman He said: "I shall give you intense pain in childbearing, you will give birth to your children in pain. Your yearning will be for your husband, and he will dominate you".

«To the man He said, "Because you listened to the voice of your wife and ate from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat, accursed be the soil because of you! Painfully will you get your food from it as long as you live. It will yield you brambles and thistles, as you eat the produce of the land. By the sweat of your face will you earn your food, until you return to the ground, as you were taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you shall return".»

I wonder whether the death penalty wouldn't have been better.

And he drove them from Eden.

«Yahweh God made tunics of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them. Then Yahweh God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us in knowing good from evil, he must not be allowed to reach out his hand and pick from the tree of life too, and eat and live forever!" So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken. He banished the man, and in front of the garden of Eden He posted the great winged creatures and the fiery flashing sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.»

This paragraph clearly shows the mercy of a loving father; even after such disobedience and the seriousness of these actions, God dresses them, gives them garments of skin -to replace the loincloth of leaves they had done. This seems a minor issue, but it is not. Clearly, God is merciful, loving, to the point that He does not keep the original death penalty and only sends them out, out of Eden to live with "the other" -the other people, men that had been conceived in the initial creation.

This raises two issues: one, how did we come to the idea that there are others out of Eden? And two, what is the meaning of the story of Eden if Adam and Eve were not the first humans?

Let's look first at the "other", the other people:

«The man had intercourse with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. "I have acquired a man with the help of Yahweh", she said. She gave birth to a second child, Abel, the brother of Cain.

«Now Abel became a shepherd and kept flocks, while Cain tilled the soil.
(...)

«Cain had intercourse with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. He became the founder of a city and gave the city the name of his son Enoch».

Here are two clues, two keys to understanding that other beings live out of Eden: first, Abel was a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller. Keep in mind that animal grazing and tillage are fairly recent human activities; man originally was nomadic gatherer, so if their tasks were plowing that means, we might say, they were modern, and that they enter the play -so to speak- in a time when humanity had developed such activities for their livelihood. And second: "Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch." How did he meet a woman if Adam and Eve were supposedly alone in the world together with Cain, because Abel had died? If there was a woman to be met it was simply because there was someone else to meet, and those were "the other."

And now, what is the meaning of the story of Adam and Eve? Why are they made? Why would God take so much trouble for just two people?

This is a much more complex issue, and to understand it we must look at the whole Bible, the whole history of the Hebrew people, the history of the chosen people; without understanding the Bible there is no way to understand Eden.

When reading the Bible I have reflected and discovered what I think is the reason, the rationale for the chosen people, the Jews. We have seen human nature in action put in evidence with Adam and Eve in the Paradise narration. Now we must see what "the other" were doing -the other people when Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel come into play-, so to speak, the game of Humanity.

These other people who were in the area were polytheistic; they believed in many gods, some of which had been given violent and vile characteristics, to the point of being offered human sacrifices. If you review some of the customs of the time and the region, you will find extremely barbaric practices, such as revenge, human sacrifice, polytheism and the worship of false gods.

It is obvious to me that God understood that among men there was much to correct and that it was time to do so; that this situation could not continue and that someone

should undertake this task. Then, considering that it was not only a matter of time and place but of nature -as demonstrated by the snake- He gives that task to the descendants of Adam and Eve, the Hebrews -later the people of Israel- today the Jewish people, the descendants of the tribe of Judah.

These people, the chosen people, are the people chosen by God to perform the hard task of recovering the lost sheep, eliminating those that cannot be redeemed and prepare the ground for the arrival of the Messiah; the Messiah Who will wipe mankind from the guilt of their sins of evil and polytheism, and Who will give them another chance.

It is for this purpose that makes sense to have eaten of the tree of good and evil, as this town -which must deal with being the role model of a new age-, must have -should have- extra knowledge "others" do not possess; and their "diploma" -the credential of having a better understanding- is the fact they ate of the fruit of good and evil. They were the only ones they knew why; they had the knowledge, awareness of why they should go towards monotheism. They knew that there was only one God; they knew there was only a single God. What is not clear to me is whether they were ever aware of the task they had been given, although they did it to perfection -beyond some delays and complications like the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the desert...

And finally, in the story of the Messiah, of Jesus, we find this people, the same chosen people, the one that must kill the Messiah in order to fulfill their task, and also to rid humanity of this tremendous guilt:

«He asked, "But what harm has he done?" But they shouted all the louder, "Let him be crucified!" Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern." And the people, every one of them, shouted back, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" » (Mateo 27:23-25).

"Let his blood be on us and on our children!". This phrase frees humanity from the terrible burden of having killed the Messiah, the Son of God.

There and then, an era ends and another begins. The idea of monotheism is already planted and spreads like a blast covering the planet until today. Changing paradigms

and laws are altered by Jesus. Jesus opens the game to all humanity. The good news of Jesus, the Messiah, is not something reserved to the Hebrews anymore; salvation includes "others" to the point that the apostles, originally Jewish, offer other people -the Gentiles- to take the job to bring the good news for everyone. No need to be Jewish to reach God; you no longer need to be Jewish to know that God is one. From Jesus the knowledge is for everyone, and we are all children of God, Jews and Gentiles. There is no distinction. We are all the same herd sheep and God is the good shepherd, our Good Shepherd.

Chapter 12

11

THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Religions

Although the intention of this book was simply to compare Genesis with science, it has been inevitable to analyze Eden; and while analyzing Eden was also inevitable to analyze the origin of the Jewish people, the chosen people.

By becoming aware of the task given to the chosen people I have understood so many attitudes and policies that have upset me, both of the Jewish people and the Catholic Church.

Now I understand why the Jews did not want to mix; the reason that the Catholic Church has replaced the pagan celebrations by their own festivities; or why they have replaced the pagan gods for the God of the Hebrews, the God of Catholics, the God of the Hindus, the god of the Buddhists, ultimately, by the one God.

Perhaps it is time for humanity to understand that we are ready to take a new step, the next step in this spiritual path; and accept that if there is only one God that God should be the same for all religions.

Sometimes I think that religions are like fleas on a car.

The idea, the image I would like to convey is this: there are fleas scattered by a car. Some of them have the revelation of "seeing" beyond and try to share it with the others; then one says, "I have seen God and know how He is." Then those around it

ask: "How is He? Tell us, how is God?" The one that had the revelation answers: "It's black, soft and jagged." Sure, that's its vision because it was on one of the wheels. Another, who also had a revelation, however says: "No, I saw God, and He is red, smooth and glossy" -of course, it describes Him this way because it was on the body. Another exclaims: "All of you are wrong, for I have seen God, and He is not like you say. God is gray and oily." -the latter was located in the engine.

In fact, all have seen God and all have part of the truth, and the only difference and where the problem of the alleged contradictions lies is, in my view, that they have accessed Him from different perspectives; they have witnessed many facets, visions of divinity, and, being unable to access the full view of God, as it were, there's no way they can possibly agree.

The question is: is there anyone who has had a full view? The answer is: No. God is immeasurable, infinite, and a human mind, finite, measurable, cannot understand by its own nature the immeasurable.

Lao Tse [\[13\]](#) said that, if one could describe God, they were actually talking about something else, because God could not be described. God -he said- is abstract, amorphous, intangible, inaudible and incomprehensible; as he argued that man has the need to name things, thus he referred to it with the word Tao [\[14\]](#).

And why can't we see God completely?

Perhaps simply because we do not want, or perhaps because we do not want to give up the installments.

But there is no hurry. The spiritual path is a path that we all run at our own pace, and God is the place where we will all arrive, inexorably, sooner or later...

13 - Lao-tse, also called Lao Tzu, Lao Zi, Laozi or Laocio, pinyin: the (ozi (literally 'Old Master'.) is a figure whose historical existence is debated; he is one of the most important philosophers of Chinese civilization. Chinese tradition states that he lived in the sixth century BC., but many modern scholars argue that he may have lived in about the fourth century BC.

14 - Tao is a metaphysical concept originating from Taoism, but also widely used in Confucianism and Chan Buddhism (Zen in Japanese) and in the Chinese religion and philosophy. The word itself can be translated literally as the way, the path, or the route; or as the method or doctrine as well. In Taoism it refers to the primordial essence or fundamental aspect of the universe; it is the natural order of existence, which actually cannot be named, in contrast to the countless "nameable" things in which it manifests itself.

APENDIX I

The Bible

The Bible is a compilation of texts that were originally separate documents (called "books") first written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek for a very lengthy period, then assembled to form the Tanakh (Old Testament to Christians) and then the New Testament. Both testaments form the Christian Bible. The Bible as such was written over 1000 years (from 900 BC to 100 AD). The oldest texts are in the Book of Judges ("Song of Deborah") and in the so-called "E" (Elohistic tradition) and "J" (Yahwistic tradition) sources of the Torah (called Pentateuch by Christians) which is dated at the time of the two kingdoms (tenth to eighth century BC). The oldest complete book, that of Hosea, is also from the same era. The Jewish people identify the Bible with the Tanakh, not indulging in any way the term Old Testament; and they do not accept the validity of the so-called New Testament, but identifying the Tanakh as the only sacred text.

The canon of the Bible we know today was sanctioned by the Catholic Church, under Pope Damasus, in the Synod of Rome in 382 AD; and this is the version Saint Jerome translated into Latin. This canon consists of 73 books: 46 that constitute the so-called Old Testament, including 7 books currently called Deuterocanonical books (Tobit, Judith, I Maccabees, II Maccabees, Wisdom, Sirach and Baruch) -which have been challenged by Jews and Protestants- and 27 of the New Testament. It was confirmed at the Council of Hippo in 393AD, and ratified at the Third Council of Carthage, in 397AD, and the Fourth Council of Carthage, in 419AD.

Enuma Elish

Babylonian Poem

"When high above heaven had not been named it had not been called with a name the mainland below; and there was just the primordial Apsu, their father, (and) Mummu-Tiamat, She Who bore Them all, They mingled their waters as one body.

And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen; when none of the gods existed, and none bore a name, and no destinies were ordained then Lahmu and Lahamu were called into being. During eternities They increased in age and height. Anshar and Kishar were formed, surpassing the Others. Days passed, years accumulated. Anu was Their son, a rival of His own parents; yes, Anu, Anshar's firstborn, was Their equal. Anu begat Nudimmud in His own image. Nudimmud became His fathers' owner, unparalleled wise, insightful, strong and powerful, much stronger than His grandfather Anshar.

He had no rival among the gods His brothers. Together the divine brothers came and went altering Tiamat when they shook from side to side; yeah, They altered Tiamat with Their hilarity in Their heavenly abode.

Apsu could not stifle Their cries and Tiamat was speechless at Their behavior. Their actions were obnoxious to [...] Their behavior was abhorrent; They became unbearable. Then Apsu, progenitor of the great gods, shouted, addressing Mummu, His vizier: "Oh Mummu, my vizier, who brightens my spirit, come with Me to Tiamat. (...)".

They went and sat down before Tiamat, deliberating about the gods, their firstborns. Apsu opened His mouth and said to the resplendent Tiamat: "Their behavior is loathsome to me. I find no relief by day or rest at night. I will destroy Them; annihilate Their works, to restore calm. Let's rest! ". As soon as Tiamat heard this, She was angry and shouted to Her husband. She shouted full of anger, alone in Her anger, on a threatening tone: "What? Are we going to destroy what We have built? Their behavior is certainly annoying, but we must be patient." Then Mummu responded and advised Apsu. Malicious and unfortunate was the advice of Mummu: "Destroy, My father, the rebellious behavior. So you'll have peace during the day and rest at night ". When Apsu heard this, His face beamed for the evil He was plotting against the gods, His children. Mummu hugged Him around the neck, sitting on His knees to kiss Him. But what They had plotted between Them was repeated by the gods, Their firstborn. When the gods heard everything They stirred, then fell silent and were speechless. Omniscient, perfect, witty, wisest, Ea guessed their plot. Ea designed and made a dominant strategy and made His counter spell, sovereign and

holy that He recited and made it subsist in the deep, spilling sleep on Apsu. When Apsu was prostrated, fast asleep, Mummu, the counselor, could not wake Him up anymore. He loosened His band, took off the tiara, left His aura and put it on Himself. After chaining Apsu, Ea killed Him; tied Mummu and chained him.

Having thus established his dwelling upon Apsu, He seized Mummu, girdling his nose. After beating and trampling his enemies, Ea, having secured His triumph over His opponents, rested in His sacred chamber plunged into a profound peace. Apsu called Him to assign the sanctuaries. Right there He established His cult hut. Ea and His wife Damkina dwelt there in splendor. In the House of destinies, home of fate, a god was engendered, wise and more powerful than the other gods. In the heart of Apsu Marduk was created. He who begot Him was Ea, His father, and Who conceived Him was Damkina, His mother. He was breastfed by the goddess. The wet nurse who raised Him made Him terrible; His figure was seductive; the light shone in His eyes; His step was manorial, longtime sovereign. When Ea -the father Who begot Him- saw Him, His face rejoiced and lit; His heart was full of joy. He made Him perfect and gave Him double divinity; He was flawless, exalted among Them; perfect were His members beyond measure, impossible to understand, difficult to perceive; four were His eyes; four were His ears; when He moved His lips, fire escaped them; great were His hearing organs and His eyes, in equal number, scrutinized everything. He was the highest of the gods; sovereign was His stature; huge His members; He was exceedingly high. "My son, my dear son! My son, Sun, Sun of heaven!". Coated with the halo of ten gods, His strength was unrivaled with all its terrible flashes.

Garden of Eden

The word used to describe garden is gan -word of Sumerian origin- meaning enclosed place, leafy garden. The Vulgate, following the LXX (seventy), translated it as paradisus, which is the popular transliteration of Persian pairi daeza, originally meaning the garden fence, and then the garden. Xenophon often speaks of fine recreation estates of the Persian kings. It is therefore clear from the name used, that the hagiographer believes that the residence of Adam is a recreational property or

leafy park, as he will specify later. And he locates it in Eden as its geographical designation. The LXX understand it here as geographic location, but in Genesis 3:23-24 is translated "Garden of Delights", as does the Vulgate: "paradisum voluptatis". Eden has been associated with the Sumerian edin and the Assyrian-Babylonian edinu, meaning desert. According to this etymology, the description of the Bible alludes to a lush garden or oasis amid the desert, which explains well the fact that Adam was cast out of the oasis to then live the hard life of the dessert by the sweat of his brow. Some authors have tried to identify the location of Bit-Adini of the Assyrian texts near Edessa. In any case, the hagiographer locates it eastward.

Bit-Adini

Bit-Adini (also known as Beth Eden) was an Aramaic state located in the Euphrates River valley in the area of the present city of Aleppo in Syria and about 20 km south of Carchemish. Most sources of information on the state are of Assyrian origin, with whom Bit Adini had several conflicts, to be eventually absorbed by the Assyrian state at the time of Shalmaneser III.

After the crisis of the great empires of the twelfth century BC, spacious semi-arid regions in northern Syria are under the political control of the Aramaic tribes that, after settling down, founded various states over the eleventh and tenth centuries BC; and will control the trade routes between Mesopotamia, the Levant and the neo-Hittite kingdoms of Anatolia. These include Bit Adini, located in the Euphrates River valley and its capital Til Barsip, strategically located on a river ford.

With the revival of Assyria, consolidated during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, Bit Adini sees its trade relations in the area in jeopardy and thus, along with Babylon, promotes small uprisings in Border States with Assyria. After crushing these uprisings, Ashurnasirpal II dares not antagonize Babylon and turns against Bit Adini, snatching the territory east of the Euphrates.

By the year 858 BC, Bit Adini heads a coalition of Aramaeans and neo-Hittite states of northern Syria and southern Anatolia against the new Assyrian king Shalmaneser III. The coalition is defeated and the kingdom of Bit Adini is annexed to Assyria and becomes a province. The capital will be renamed Kar-Shulman-ashare-du ("Shalmaneser's Fort") and will host the provincial government.

The conquest by Assyria was not a big cultural change in the region; the Aramaic language remained and prospered, and part of the local oligarchy entered the service of the Assyrian Empire.

The Vulgate

The Vulgate is a translation of the Bible into Latin, made at the end of the fourth century (in 382 AD) by Saint Jerome. It was commissioned by Pope Damasus I two years before his death (366-384). The version takes its name from the phrase *vulgata editio* (editing for the people) and was written in a casual Latin in contrast to the classical Latin of Cicero, in which Saint Jerome was an expert. The aim of the Vulgate was to be easier to understand and more accurate than its predecessors.

LXX

The Greek Bible, commonly called the Septuagint Bible or Bible of the Seventy, and often simply abbreviated LXX, was translated from Hebrew and Aramaic texts older than the subsequent series of issues that centuries later were settled in the current form of the Hebrew-Aramaic text the Tanakh or the Hebrew Bible.

The name Septuagint comes from the fact that the total number of its 72 translators used to be rounded to 70. The Letter of Aristeas presents as historical fact an old version according to which, at the direction of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (284-246 BC), Greek ruler of Egypt, 72 Jewish sages sent by the High Priest of Jerusalem worked separately in the translation of the sacred texts of the Jewish people. According to the same legend, the comparison of the work of all the sages revealed an almost miraculous coincidence among them.

Cain and Abel

They are presented in the Bible as a farmer and a shepherd. Agriculture and grazing did not appear until the Neolithic period, since until then man lived by hunting and fishing. A great grandson of Cain is introduced as the first ironmonger, and it is known that the production of that metal had not happened in history until the twelfth century BC.

APENDIX II

Valley of the Whales [\[15\]](#) (Wadi Al-Hitan, Egypt)

15 - Extract from a note of the National Geographic magazine in which Philip Gingerich, one of the researchers who worked in Wadi Al-Hitan, Egypt, known as the valley of the whales, is interviewed. I found it interesting that he referred to them as "ferocious sea monsters."

The Egyptian deserts were -over forty million years ago- part of the seabed of the Tethys Sea that surrounded the supercontinent Pangaea.

In northern Egypt, about 200 km from Cairo, is Wadi Al-Hitan, known as the Valley of the Whales. There, a group of researchers among which was Philip Gingerich, a vertebrate paleontologist at the University of Michigan, dug and studied the fossil remains of whales.

In the interview conducted by Tom Mueller for National Geographic to Philip Gingerich, the paleontologist said: "Walking through a desert that 40 million years ago was a vast sea inhabited by ferocious sea monsters is not an activity that can be done every day. In Wadi Al-Hitan it is easy to feel like a rainfed diver that explores the depths of prehistory, as this corner of sand and breathtaking scenery preserved fossils of hundreds of species that inhabited the legendary Tethys Sea during the

Eocene period". And no wonder this place was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005.

The first fossils were discovered in 1936.

Today, the valley is a large open-air museum where you can see the paleontological pieces exposed on the sand. Most of these remains belong to skeletons of whales and their ancestors: ridges of baby "Dorudon" whales; jaws; columns and vertebrae of "Basilosaurus" whales (15 meters long whales lizard or "dragon"-shaped -hence its scientific name- with mouths endowed with fine and sharp teeth); turtles; swordfish; sea urchins; and the list goes on. Fossilized mangroves and other plant species can also be seen.

Gingerich and his team are responsible for having located over a thousand fossils of whales in the last twenty seven years. But... where did these fossils come from? How did they get there? In order to answer these questions we should do an exercise of imagination.

Let's think on a 15 meters long beast with large jaws and sharp teeth that dies and sinks to the bottom of the Tethys Sea in the territories that many years later would integrate Egypt.

Over millions of years sediments build up over his body, layer by layer. Finally, the sea recedes and exposes the seabed which gradually turns into desert.

The wind slowly wears the sandstone and clay is deposited on bones-sandstone and clay that are now part of the soil.

One day, after hundreds of thousands of years, scientists, geologists and paleontologists -like Philip Gingerich- arrive and expose them to the world in an attempt to unravel its mysteries.

When interviewed in Wadi Al-Hitan by National Geographic, Philip Gingerich, while clearing a vertebrae the size of a tree with a brush, commented: "I spend so much time surrounded by aquatic creatures than soon after being here I live in their world. When I look at this desert, I see the ocean." He continues, "Complete specimens like that Basilosaurus are the Rosetta stone" in reference to fossils like those representing the links that clarify the evolution of whales.

He wants to find the key to explain the evolution of whales, their departure to the mainland and back to the sea in its slow evolutionary path. In fact, he has devoted much of his career to explain the metamorphosis of cetaceans -perhaps the most radical of evolutionary metamorphosis of the animal kingdom.

Whales have a common ancestor in a flathead tetrapod (four-legged) that looks like a salamander and originally came out of the sea to those beaches 360 million years ago and then returned to it. His descendants -by migrating to the mainland- improved the functions of their primitive lungs and changed fins for legs, among other adaptations. These mammals would eventually become one of the most successful land animal groups ever known and came to dominate Earth.

The interesting thing is that cetaceans returned from whence they came, evolutionarily, and their body adapted to life at sea again. How they held such a big transformation has puzzled scientists for a long, long time.

At the time, Charles Darwin attempted to explain the enigma, perhaps sensing part of the evolutionary mechanism. In the first edition of *The Origin of Species*, where he wrote he had observed bears floating for hours in the water with their mouths open eating insects floating on the surface, said: "I see no obstacle to a race of bears becoming, by natural selection, more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with an increasingly large mouth, to produce a monstrous beast like a whale ". Opponents made so much fun of this image that Darwin removed it from later editions.

In 1977, Gingerich and his team discovered pelvic bones and jokingly attributed them to "walking whales". Back then, the idea of whales walking on all fours seemed ridiculous. Then, with the following findings, the pieces of the puzzle finally fell into place and clearly explained the adaptive changes of these wonderful animals.

Gingerich himself recounted: "The enormous environmental transition of whales began to interest me more and more. Since then, I have devoted all my time to the pursuit of the many transitional forms of that giant leap from land to sea. I want to find them all."

By 1989, the paleontologist found the link between whales and their terrestrial ancestors. He had discovered, in a skeleton of Basilosaurus, the first knee of a whale located in one part of the spine, much lower than he had imagined. This was the first of many similar discoveries. Now he knew what to look for and where.

Much water under the bridge, as they say, and many discoveries and puzzle pieces have fallen into place, discoveries that show us today a very different landscape from that of millions of years ago. 50 million years ago or more, the whales that inhabited the area were very far from being the beautiful and peaceful animals we know today. The huge Ambulocetus, predators of 700 kilos with short legs and enormous, elongated jaws like a furry marine crocodile; or the long-necked, heron-head Dalanistes, might have seemed to us-as Tom Mueller wrote- much more than "ferocious sea monsters."

The journalist at the end of his article says: "Gingerich is still surprised by the fact that some people see a conflict between religion and science. During my last night in Wadi Al-Hitan, we moved slightly away from the camp under a starlit sky. 'I guess I've never been particularly devout, he said, but I consider my work very spiritual. Just imagining the whales who swam here, and thinking about how they lived and died, and how much the world has changed since then, puts you in touch with something much bigger than you, your community or your daily life'. He stretched his arms to embrace the dark horizon and the desert with its sandstone formations sculpted by wind and its countless silent whales. `There is room here for any religion you want.' "

APENDIX III

The location of Eden [\[16\]](#)

Despite how controversial the proposals of the British Egyptologist David M. Rohl are, the fact is that some parables of Genesis bear resemblance to actual events that took place thousands of years ago in the fields around the lakes Van and Urmia, nestled in the "Fertile Crescent", a broad region encompassing southern Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Rohl relates Eden with rivers that irrigate the area.

The Egyptologist remembers that the Bible's Paradise is an idyllic garden full of fountains. Interestingly, in the Taurus Mountains, very close to the site of Göbekli Tepe, more than ten rivers rise. "And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divided into four heads," says Genesis.

The four primeval rivers were the Pishon, the Gibbon, the Hiddekel -Hebrew name of the Tigris- and the Euphrates. According to Rohl's theory, the true identity of Gibbon and Pishon rivers was revealed by Reginald Walker, a late British scholar who published his findings in 1986. In that region of the world the Aras River flows. But before the Islamic invasion of the eighth century, as Walker discovered, the Aras River was known as the Gaihun, equivalent to the Hebrew Gibbon. Therefore, the current Tigris -ancient Hideken-, along with the Euphrates, the Pishon and Gibbon, makes the fluvial quartet mentioned in Genesis. The inhabitants of their banks now navigate them in shallow-draft boats.

Meanwhile, David Rohl found Victorian dictionaries that refer to this river as Gibbon-Aras. But does this river exist? In his book, Walker says Pishon is simply a derivation from Hebrew Uizon -similar to Pishon-, name of an aquifer that irrigates the lands of the region.

Walker made another discovery. This is the village of Noqdi, which might be the land of Nod, where Cain was exiled after killing Abel. According to Rohl, Noqdi's location fits perfectly with what is written in Genesis: "And Cain went out from before the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, which is east of Eden."

Using all sources, not just the Bible, the controversial British Egyptologist says that the inhabitants of Paradise migrated to Mesopotamia in the sixth millennium BC and settled in Sumer, where a great culture flourished that led to the invention of writing and the creation of Uruk, considered the first great city of humanity. According to the Bible, the plain of Sumer, south of the city of Zagros, is where Adam's descendants migrated after the flood.

The so-called "path of ceramics" provides evidence of that migration. The earliest pottery appears in the northern Zagros Mountains and is from the seventh millennium BC. The next generation of earthenware is from the sixth millennium and was found south of the Zagros. The first pieces of "modern" pottery, five thousand years old, have been unearthed in Uruk.

David Rohl remembers that some ancient legends collected the same parables and myths as the Bible. For example, a Sumerian legend mentions a heavenly hill, Du-ku, where agriculture was invented. Also, the "Lady of the Mountain" of the Sumerian tradition was the mother of all living beings, the same consideration as the Old Testament gives Eve.

In the Sumerian creation myth, the god Ninhursak disfigured Enki's (Adam) behavior for eating the forbidden ground of Paradise, a sin that put him on the brink of death. Ninhursak relented and created a goddess called Ninti -the Lady of the rib- to heal him. The British Egyptologist believes that this was the origin of the biblical Eve.

Rohl also dares to identify the place where Noah's Ark landed after the flood. In his opinion, the incident did not occur on Mount Ararat, but on a mountain called Judi Dag, south of Lake Van. According to him, the biblical parable must keep some historical truth, given the variety of Mesopotamian references about the terrible floods that devastated the shores of the Tigris and Euphrates in the late fourth millennium BC

In another twist, the British Egyptologist says that the Sumerians were the leading traders in East Africa, being the founders of Pharaonic Egypt, which has sparked criticism from his colleagues, who reject his boldness to rewrite ancient history using biblical sources.

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